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AUNT GUTTRAUD

AUNT GUTTRAUD

For the Friday evening meal, as the "entrance to the Sabbath," we Jews have always regarded fish an absolute essential. I do not know the historic explanation of the fact. The Bible mentions only two favorite national foods, onions and garlic. Whether the piscatory dish had its origin in the fishing of Peter, or in the miracle of the fishes, it is for the archæologists to determine. So much, however, I do know, that in my native city, where Protestants preponderated, and there were, besides, a sprinkling of Catholics and a considerable number of Jews, it was almost exclusively for the Jews that the peasants of the vicinity held market every Friday at the so-called "Fischstein." Here Jewish buyers of both sexes came to purchase their portion of "Shabbesfish," the women carrying the fish

Answer

But my mother, without regard for the rank of the fish, always prepared them with her own hands, because my father declared that no one in the world could make fish sauce "à la mother." And it was with just pride that every Friday forenoon she would tie her white apron about her waist, and set herself to cooking the Friday evening fish.

My little sister and myself were permitted to hang on to each string and witness this marvel of the culinary art. When she removed the pieces of fish from the shining brass kettle, and laid them symmetrically

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upon a long platter (the fish were served cold in the evening), she never failed to put the most meaty piece, including the head and a goodly portion next to the head, on a separate plate, garnish it with onions and slices of lemon, pour over it the sauce smelling of spices, and place the dish on the scoured serving table, at the same time saying,

“For Aunt Guttraud.”

Every week we children saw the offering of this enviable tribute, unable to account for the necessity imposed upon us of getting along with headless fish.

Aunt Guttraud was a sister of my mother's mother. She never set foot outside her sorry dwelling near the old Shul, the orthodox synagogue, where she lived with a sick husband and two daughters, who were no longer young. My mother always mentioned her name with an expression of pious reverence, which carried us children along in its fervor, though we could not

comprehend it. Nor did we ever ask the cause of it, and our respectful timidity waxed into holy awe when, after the Friday evening service, we ascended the wooden staircase, provided with a cord in place of a railing, and entered Aunt Guttraud's home, to be blessed by the old woman, a custom introduced by our mother.

To this very day the picture of the room is vivid in my mind. I can even smell its smell. The memory of the olfactory sense is tenacious. For while I am writing, I am breathing in that atmosphere of cabbage steam, illuminating oil, and camphor which tightened my breast fifty years ago, and which always recalls Aunt Guttraud when it happens to assail my nostrils in the habitations of the poor.

It was not without inner reluctance that we children entered her room. It was long and low. A seven-beaked brass lamp depended from the blackened cross-beam of the ceiling, two of its lips spurring the flame

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of a wick dipped in oil. It threw a garish light on the round table beneath, covered with a white cloth, while the rest of the dreary chamber lay in a dusky half-light. The worm-eaten floor was strewn with white sand, which cracked weirdly under our feet. In a corner, in the depths of the room glimmered an iron coal-stove; from the ash grate the wind drove puffing little gray clouds. In the other corner stood a bed hung with red and blue checked calico, where our aunt's husband—we never called him uncle—lay sick of the gout, his hands and feet wrapped in camphor bags. Near the bed, in a leather arm-chair, sat our aunt. Holding a thick prayer-book bound in leather in her hand and still moving her lips mutely in prayer, she arose to welcome us. Our mother reached out her hand with a gesture as in obeisance to the old woman, who laid our mother's head softly on her shoulder, and repeatedly stroked her forehead with the palm of her hand.

“ Bless my children, Aunt Guttraud! ”

Our mother never failed to say this, for the humble old woman seemed to wait for the request.

She took a few steps forward into the lighter part of the room, where we children cowered timidly at the edge of the table.

Aunt Guttraud was of medium height and spare. Her figure was bent, or rather broken, and was enveloped in a close-fitting dark printed calico gown, and her pale face seemed waxen yellow in contrast with the white kerchief that lay crossed over her breast without the least attempt at adornment. A black band carefully held in the hair over her forehead, and a white tulle cap framed the severe, aristocratic face. Her finely cut nose was like transparent ivory. When the narrow lips parted, they revealed the white of well-preserved teeth. Dark eyebrows arched proudly over the deer-brown eyes, which shone with a moist gleam, as from behind tears.

As she laid her thin parchment hands upon our heads, her eyes turned soulfully toward heaven, and her lips moved so softly in the formula of the blessing, that we heard only the buzzing of the flies about the hanging-lamp and the low groaning from behind the curtains that hid the sick man from view. Then she kissed us on our foreheads, and we drew her withered hand to our lips hesitatingly. With scarcely audible steps the old woman moved to a glass cupboard, where a few painted cups peered out from behind the dull panes, and took two Borsdorf pippins from a drawer. We munched them while our mother, yielding to an insistent invitation to sit down, carried on a subdued conversation with her aunt.

“Well, how goes it, aunt?”

“Thank God, not bad. The gout is stubborn, especially in autumn, but the Lord will help.”

“Did you get any sleep last night?”

“A little. Old people don’t need much

sleep. *He* sleeps little, too. But he has an appetite, thank the Lord, and he enjoys the fish very much. Nobody cooks them like my Betty."

"Won't you take a meal with us once, dear aunt? You promised me long ago you would."

"I will, some time, when I can get away from him. I'd rather send you one of the girls. They sew their eyes out—good children! God bless them!"

"And how do you feel?"

"I? Thank God *he's* no worse. Praised be the Healer of the sick, and blessed be He who comforts the ill of body and supports them that totter!"

And the thin hand was raised over the head of our mother, who sank her eyes humbly before the deep, moist glance of the old woman.

There is a knock at the door. Our mother rises. The apples have been consumed. We draw a breath of relief as we

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pass through the narrow doorway into the narrow street.

"Children," says our mother, "Aunt Guttraud is a saint in Israel."

We believed her—saints are honored, and the world does not ask why. Children do not demand proofs. Our great-aunt stood far removed from our childish interests. She towered in our life only by the height of a fish's head, and impressed it with the weight of an apple. And the curtailment was soon forgotten, when we got our ample portion, if not of the fish, which might have been too dangerous to our gullets because of its bones, at least of the sauce "à la mother."

✓
Some twenty years later I came back home from the university. How changed I found everything, and how strange! Death with the help of his most zealous servant, the cholera, had reaped a plenteous harvest. My father lay out there in the "good place."

As for all the others whose decease had been reported to me from time to time, my heart preserved scarcely a recollection of them. My home was almost deserted. My brothers lived scattered abroad, and my sister was married. Yet my mother did not reign in loveless rule over a desert spot; for her heart embraced humanity at large, and she was the focus of the diverging rays of the family. She had become providence to all the poor and suffering of the community.

Our meeting after the long separation was sad. We embraced in silence, each desiring to spare the feelings of the other. But the quiet only added to the oppressiveness in the desolate house.

“Let us go to our dear ones!” said my mother.

I wanted to go alone for her sake, but she smiled and said:

“It’s my usual walk. The ‘good place’ is my garden, my Persepolis.”

About three miles from the city the Jew-

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ish cemetery lies on a hill at the edge of an oak grove. If one wants to avoid the dirty village, he takes the path through the "forest," a meadow edged with poplar trees and covered with saffron. My mother carried the key of the cemetery gate as for her own home. We wandered about among friends and acquaintances, and every tombstone sent us the greeting of a familiar name.

We had paid our tribute of mourning at my father's grave, and with hearts somewhat lightened walked through the rows of graves, now and then picking up stones to lay as mementos upon the last abiding-places of our relatives and friends. My mother halted before a flat stone whose Hebrew inscription it was difficult for me to decipher, and she said in a moved voice, as if introducing some beloved friend:

"Aunt Guttraud."

The memory from my childhood suddenly arose before me—the picture of the old

woman veiled in mystery. Before the insoluble riddle of death, my heart for the first time experienced a strong desire to find out the reason of the peculiar reverence paid this "saint in Israel." I seated myself on the edge of the stone, and drew my mother into the shade of a weeping willow, which she herself had planted there.

"What is this veneration you bring Aunt Guttraud even in her grave? How great she must have been if a soul like yours bows before her in awe!"

My mother, almost terrified, fended off the comparison.

"Child, how can you compare me with that martyr? God in his mercy granted me rare joy in my children. When grief came to me, it was only the common lot of humanity that I experienced. She was the holiest of sufferers, a heroine of humility, a martyr to fidelity. A sacrifice for love's sake we can readily comprehend, because most of us consider ourselves capable of

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making it. But Aunt Guttraud stands alone. She sacrificed herself to her loyalty. I never told you children of her life, because the halo surrounding her covers a blot on the family scutcheon. A child's nature should not be clouded by the recital of man's errors and transgressions. But now that you know life with its lights and shadows, I need not hesitate to tell you Aunt Guttraud's story.

"She was an older sister of my mother, your sainted grandmother—blessed be her memory! She was married in a town not far from the capital, and we heard little of her until her husband died, and she moved over here with her two daughters. She had enough to provide for the necessities of modest people. She was a practiced hand at bead embroidery, and the girls took in sewing. Despite her forty years she was still a handsome woman. I remember with what an aristocratic air she walked.

"That was in the French times, when

Jerome Bonaparte was king, and held his court here, and a crowd of adventurers came over from France and Alsace to settle in our city. Then everything was gay, and humbug reigned supreme, and in the newer part of the city shops were built as big and magnificent as along the Zeil in Frankfort. The finest was opened by two brothers, Alsatian Jews. The news that the elder had engaged himself to Aunt Guttraud created a vast deal of excitement in the Jewish community. Probably his chief motive was to get into our family, which was among the most honored, though not the richest. Besides, Aunt Guttraud in her white wedding coif looked a really beautiful, regal woman.

“I was still a girl, and danced at the wedding, which was held in the town hall. My mother of blessed memory came home from the wedding feast shaking her head sadly. The extravagant goings-on had depressed her, and the bridegroom’s personality had filled her with repugnance.

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“ ‘There was no rustle to *his* swaddling clothes,’ she said, to designate the upstart.

“ Alas, she had seen only too clearly. Aunt’s marriage was not a happy one. Her gentle, refined heart suffered under her husband’s coarseness. It was said, he actually maltreated her, though she stubbornly denied it.

“ The step-daughters comforted themselves with their finer clothes, and with the fact that they no longer needed to work for other people. Aunt remained exactly what she had been before her marriage, but we withdrew more and more from her house, because a deep-seated aversion led us always to regard our new uncle as a stranger.

“ The ‘ French period ’ passed. The Elector was reinstated by the three allies. I was among the ‘ white maidens ’ who received him at the Weser Gate. But as everybody then said, the times had only grown worse. The Westphalian court had set much money afloat in the city. Now, however, that there

was no longer luxurious living to provide for, the wealth of the people passed away. They made a virtue of simplicity, and one after another of the large shops shut down. The Alsatian brothers shared the common lot. One of them absconded; the other grew poorer and poorer, and with the loss of his money his brutality only increased, and Aunt Guttraud's resignation also. She set herself again to stringing beads into little green purses and selling them herself; while the girls started a sewing school, and made shirts for customers. Nevertheless, if one of her relatives offered Aunt Guttraud any help, she always declined it with resolute pride:

“‘*He* will provide enough for his family!’

“By this time I had been married a year, and your good father would gladly have permitted me to do something for my poor aunt. When *he* was away—which happened for half a week at a time—I would visit

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her, and I saw how her full face was growing thin and pale from inner grief, though no word of complaint ever passed her lips. It was only in secret that I dared to slip little supplies of coffee and sugar into the hands of the daughters. I recognized their mother's dresses in their warm underskirts, and guessed that this was the reason why she wore a thin cotton dress even on cold winter days. She would say of her husband that he had 'gone away' on business, and she believed what she said. But a most peculiar circumstance was connected with his 'going away.' It set the community gossiping that he returned with money in his pocket and a watch-chain with a gold seal.

"You know, my child, that at that time every little German principality demanded its own customs duties, and we were barred from Hanover as well as from Frankfort. The large amount of goods that came to us, especially from Hamburg, was heavily taxed at the boundary, at Landwehrhagen. As a

result, all sorts of hiding-places were established, to which smugglers carried their wares in the dark, and then, clandestinely, transported them to the city. The border guards chased up and down by day and by night to discover and raid these dens, if for no other reason than that every thief found a good market in them for his stolen articles. The penalty attached to smuggling and concealing goods was constantly increased, and no mercy was shown those who were detected.

“One day, in the week before the great festivals, the news came that one of these thieves’ and smugglers’ cellars had been raided at Landwehrhagen, and the ring-leaders were being brought to town in handcuffs. I listened to the report rather indifferently, and, Jewish housewife that I was, who had little time for leaning out of the window, I should have seen nothing of the hubbub the event created, had I not happened to be cleaning windows just as the

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prisoners were being driven to the barracks in an open wagon escorted on each side by border guards. The yells of the rabble, in which I caught the cry 'Yidde, Yidde,' made me lean my head out of the window, and I nearly fell to the floor from the shock of the sight that met my eyes. I had to hold on to the window frame for support. There, on the front bench in the wagon, with hands bound across each other, sat *he*, the wretched husband of my poor Aunt Guttraud.

"How shall I tell you, my child? Fright lamed my legs and feet. The turmoil in the city was worse than at a conflagration. Our neighbors stood in front of their doors, and stuck their heads out of the windows, screaming invectives at him and all the Jews. I quickly pulled down our window shades.

"Your father came from his office ashen pale. The whole Jewish community was struck by the blow. If a single Jew com-

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mits a folly, all his co-religionists must pay the penalty. But I didn't think of the community when your father told me that for a long time the head of the smugglers had been that wretched husband of Aunt Guttraud.

“ ‘Poor Aunt Guttraud!’ was all I could utter.

“ ‘Go over to her,’ your father suggested in his goodness of heart.

“ I went. It was the first time, I think, I ever walked the streets with my head bare. On the way I wanted to think over what I should say to my aunt to comfort her. But nothing occurred to me except

“ ‘Poor Aunt Guttraud!’

“ When I reached her home, I found the girls in a state of wild, tearless despair. Their bitter curses disgusted me. They told me their mother had gone away, they didn't know where, whether to the police, to the prison, or the president of the congregation. For a long time they had suspected the

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thing, though he had squandered his ill-gotten gains on himself, and had never brought any of the money home. They had always hated him, they said, but their mother was blind to his faults, and would not permit a word to be breathed against him—not that she loved him, or held him to be better than he was, but submissiveness and loyalty had waxed in her to a foolish passion. Now, they declared, they were all dishonored, and there was nothing left them to do but jump into the Fulda. With great difficulty I was getting them to restrain their dismal clamors and outcries, when the door opened, and in walked Aunt Guttraud.

“I was amazed to see her erect and almost unchanged, except that her face was paler than ever, and deep blue rings lay under her large brown eyes. Her eyelids twitched constantly as if from visible pulse-beats. I threw myself on her neck sobbing, The girls became silent.

“‘My dear good Betty,’ she said quietly,

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'it is a severe ordeal to which God is subjecting us, but what God does is well done.'

"'God did it, did He?' screamed the older daughter, with an hysterical, heart-rending laugh.

"Her mother drew herself up to her full height. Her look fairly annihilated her daughter.

"'You condemn him before our enemies condemn him? Has it been proved what he's done? And if he did it, for whom was it? In order to give us better days—because he felt sorry for your needle-pricked fingers, he turned his own—I won't say it in so many words. God have mercy on him! But if people have no mercy on him, if, God forbid, the others condemn him and desert him, I am his wife—under the Chuppe I swore I should be faithful to him. I will hear no word against him, else, so truly as God lives, I will have myself locked up in the barracks with him.'

"'Aunt Guttraud!' I exclaimed, and

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with tears of admiration I wanted to grasp her hand, but she withdrew it.

“ ‘Why should you marvel?’ she said in surprise. ‘As if there were anything in what I’m doing! Are we Goyim, to cast stones at our own flesh and blood? Thank the Lord, I am a Jewish woman, and I know what is written in the law. What I think, every woman thinks who is not a blasphemer. You speak to your husband, Betty, my dear, he is in favor with the burgomaster. I appealed in vain to the Parness. He says they don’t dare mix in. They’ll be glad if they’re not forced into the affair in spite of themselves. But the prison commissary, whom they denounced as the greatest Roshe, listened to me, and permitted me to bring him soup as long as he’s a prisoner there. So, at least, he needn’t eat Treifes. And now, excuse me, Betty, I want to go into the kitchen to see that he gets his soup.’

“She went out. Without saying any-

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thing to the girls, I nodded my head toward the saint-like sufferer, to show them I thought her an example for them. As I left, I saw her in the dark kitchen getting the pot ready, as carefully as though preparing broth for a sick child."

My mother paused a moment in her narrative, then said:

"You mustn't think, my child, that this is all. The worst and the most glorious came later.

"The proceedings lasted for weeks, but proofs and his own confession were against him. Evil things came to light, which wicked tongues enlarged and noised about, so that they reached the ears of the poor wife. Her demeanor, however, remained unchanged. Day after day she carried his meals to the prison, and even got permission to see him and speak to him in the presence of witnesses. No one ever heard her reproach him. On the contrary, they heard only mild, soothing words of comfort,

which, no doubt, she would have uttered even if no one had been there to hear her. She never left her house except to see him, never received visitors, and even refrained from going out to sell her bead embroideries, into which as many tears were sewed as beads. The only occasion that drew her from her home was New Year's Eve, when she went to Shul as usual. The pious, dressed-up women avoided her, to be sure; but she paid no attention to them, and remained in her place, as had been her wont, without looking up from her prayer-book. She did not raise her eyes until the 'Ovinu Malkenu,' and then, at the words, 'Remember that we are but dust,' she turned them toward heaven with so fervent, so searching a look, that she seemed to be beseeching God's mercy for all earth-born.

"Soon after Succos the verdict was pronounced. Most of the smugglers came off with a light penalty, on the plea that they had been misled. But the ringleader was

condemned to imprisonment for ten years, and—I still shudder when I speak of it—to three hours' exposure in the pillory.

“The verdict was a terrible blow to the community as a whole. If he had not been a Jew, they all said, the shame would not have been put upon him, such a shame as had not been inflicted upon any man for ten years. But the government at that time, from gratitude for having won ‘German freedom,’ was very bigoted, and celebrated the eighteenth of October on the ‘Kratzenberg’ with a bonfire, into which it would gladly have stuck every Jew. Your father, noble man that he was, hurried to the burgo-master, once again, with two deputies from the congregation. They adjured Schomburg, who was a liberal-minded man, to prevent this stain from being put upon the Jews. They represented to him that the mob might take the punishment in the pillory as the occasion for anti-Jewish demonstrations, and do damage to Jewish houses.

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The burgomaster shrugged his shoulders. He knew full well whence the wind was blowing.

“‘I can do nothing for him,’ he said, ‘but I will look out for the safety of all the others.’

“Then the relatives collected a hundred dollars among themselves to give to the Elector’s chamberlain, who had great influence over the Elector, in order to get him to put in a good word for the convict. The hundred dollars remained with the chamberlain, and the horrible sentence remained the same.

“What I suffered throughout that dreadful period I can’t describe to you. At night I would sit up in bed for hours at a time, and cry. Only the sight of my husband and my children calmed me sufficiently to go to sleep. If I succeeded in seeing Aunt Guttraud on her way to the prison and speaking to her, I was filled with sheer astonishment. She was so quiet, so resigned—as if God

had sent down a stroke of lightning, or inflicted death upon some one dear to her, and all she could do was bow her head in meek silence. The girls hid themselves in their room, and would allow no one to see them. Each of us took turns in sending them their meals, which, however, were almost always returned untouched.

“On the following Friday afternoon the terrible show was to be presented. At that time the old town hall with its slate roof and pointed towers still stood on the market-place, at the corner of Fish Street. Under the clock was the pretty legend:

“‘Eins Manns Red’ keins Manns Red’,
Du sollst die Part hören beed.’¹

Do you still remember it? It was exactly opposite the house in which your sainted grandparents used to live. Right at the corner was a turret coming down to the level of

¹“A single man’s testimony is as though none had spoken. Thou shouldst hearken to the speech of both parties.”

the street, provided on the outside with an iron grill and behind this a revolving screen on which the wretched sinner was chained and shoved out. There he stood, his breast bared, a target for the abusive language and the flying stones of the mob.

“These ghastly proceedings, which revolt every humane sentiment and arouse the animal passions, had been abolished by the ‘godless’ French, and reinstituted by the devout Evangelical government!

“And now *he* was to be exposed, he who unfortunately belonged to our family, a family which never the shadow of a stain had touched.

“I shall always remember that day. It was worse for the community than Tisho be-Av. The shops of the Jews were closed, and not a single Jew was to be seen on the streets. The children were kept from school to prevent the street urchins from injuring them.

“I must tell you, my child, that I seemed

miserable and cowardly for staying at home and thinking of myself, when poor Aunt Guttraud was probably perishing in an agony of woe. If it is a God-pleasing deed to attend the dying, how can one let a person remain alone whose soul is dying a hundred-fold death? I said this to your father.

“‘Do what you want,’ he replied, ‘I will look out for the children.’

“I took my shawl, and ran over to Aunt Guttraud’s, but I found the door locked, and I shook it in vain. Her neighbor, the seamstress Engelbrecht, came to the stairs, and told me the girls had locked themselves in, and the poor madam was gone.

“‘Gone, gone! Where?’

“‘Do I know?’ she asked, shrugging her shoulders. ‘When a person’s in despair, he doesn’t know what he does. Well, well, I’m sorry for the poor woman.’

“I slipped away with even a heavier heart. Would you believe it, child, I was capable of thinking that that saint in Israel

had done what the woman had suspected her of doing.

“‘Yes,’ I said to myself, ‘she’s committed some violence on herself.’

“How ashamed I was of my suspicions when I learned what she actually had done.

“The hour had come. An innumerable throng filled the market-place. The brutal mob rejoiced in the prospect of a beastly spectacle, and bawled abusive songs, mocking the Jews. Soldiers and police were stationed about, and barred the nearest approaches to the town hall. At a large window a justice of the peace was reading the sentence, which the mob received with clamorous applause. When he finished, the fateful screen began to turn, and the unfortunate wretch came into sight, his breast bared, his head bowed, his face more repulsive than ever because of his beard grown ragged in prison. A still wilder howl! Here and there people were already beginning to duck for pebbles to throw at the man

in the pillory, when—I'm telling you the story exactly as it was told in the daily papers—when the little door of the town hall on Fish Street opened, and Aunt Guttraud stepped out into the space kept clear by the guards. Instead of crossing it, she remained standing at the corner before the pillory, caught hold of the iron grill with her bare, withered hands, and raised herself to the platform of shame, where she stood visible to all, close by her husband, the man to whom she had sworn faithfulness under the Chuppe.

“ She stood there for hours, and not with that look of despair which is depicted on the face of the Madonna under the cross. No, she stood calm and quiet, as if the thing were a matter of course. Her lips moved softly as in silent prayer, her eyes remained fixed on *him*, while he looked down on her, thick tears rolling into his beard, which he could not wipe away.

“ Her coming was like a flash of light-

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ning, no, like a ray of sunlight, sent down by God upon this mass of humanity. The hurling of epithets and the howling died down.

“‘His wife! His wife! His innocent wife!’ was passed about from mouth to mouth, in a subdued whisper, and so many slipped away that the guards no longer had to prevent pushing and crowding. Matthias the pastor, who was going to the ‘Brotherhood Church’ for evening service, learned what had happened in the market-place, and he bent his head reverentially.

“The news ran like wildfire through the Jewish community, and gradually all our co-religionists streamed to the market-place. The feeling of shame had ebbed from every heart, and was replaced by pride. The crime that *he* had committed was known everywhere and in all times; but such martyrdom for the sake of marital fidelity had never been heard of before. Everybody marvelled in silence. There was a shaking and nod-

ding of heads, and a subdued sobbing. The old Rav raised his hands, and cried aloud:

“ ‘ May God pardon me, old as I am, I do not know what Broche to pronounce on this occasion.’

“ I have always thought it was at the burgomaster’s intervention that the time was curtailed and the man removed from the public gaze. Now the mob wanted to break through the cordon, possibly to seize Aunt Guttraud and carry her home on their shoulders. But she disappeared through the same little door by which she had come. It was in vain that all tried to visit her, for the Parness and the entire community now all of a sudden found their way to her house. She was with her husband in his cell, or had locked herself in with her daughters.

“ Once I found her after many fruitless attempts, and I fell on my knees, as on the Day of Atonement when they fall Korim. She looked at me, rebuke in her eyes.

“ ‘Betty,’ she said, ‘what a sin! What would your mother think, peace be with her? She was ten times better than I am.’

“ When the daughter of the Elector was born, many convicts were pardoned, and many had their sentence shortened. *He*, too, came out of prison. But the dampness of the cell had entered his hands and feet, and he lay abed with the gout the rest of his life, as you used to see him, wrapped in camphor bags and nursed by his faithful wife like a sick child. The family got a small annuity together, which helped the little household out, what with the earnings of the two girls in addition.

“ Shortly after you left the city, he was released from his pain. The life duty of the patient sufferer came to an end. Since there was no longer anything for her to do on earth, God soon called her to Him. The older daughter became a teacher in an industrial school; the younger married a country school teacher.

“ This is the story of the saint in Israel who rests under this stone.”

My mother arose. The sun was sinking behind the grove of oaks, and shot out a last gleam, which sparkled in her tear-filled eyes.

“ Are there still such women in Israel? ” she asked.

I looked at her in silence, and pressed her dear hands.

SCHLEMIHLCHEN

SCHLEMIHLCHEN

Her real name was Emilchen, the diminutive by which the namesakes of Emilia Galotti are called in our part of the country, and she was the daughter of our cousin Katz, who became a widow shortly after marriage, and was left with only this one child. She was a frail little thing, subject to convulsions from infancy. These often recurred later in life, and imparted a certain hesitancy and jerkiness to her movements. Naturally, the anxious mother, who was the only one with no perception of her ungainliness, pampered and coddled her. With the rest of the community, however, these characteristics gained the nickname for her that gives the title to our story.

She received it from old Levy, the wag of the Kille, who kept a little shop of needles and thread in Market Street, and possessed

a tongue even sharper than his needles. When he saw her for the first time at a concert in the Park, shambling about and forever stepping on somebody's foot, he asked:

"Who's that Menuvelte?"

"Emilchen," was the answer.

"I should call her Schlemihlchen."

The name stuck to her ever after.

According to what I remember of my Hebrew studies, Shelo-mi-el means a God-forsaken creature. It is the antonym of "child of fortune," and designates a person who is down on his luck, to use a slang expression. Chamisso introduced the word into German literature by his story of a good-natured fellow, named Peter Schlemihl, who wanders haplessly through the world because—he lacks a shadow. Yes, a Schlemihl lacks nothing but a shadow, or rather, a light, a halo, an aura, which the graces breathe upon mortals when they stand at their cradles. The world demands this

aroma of the graces in every human being, and all the cardinal virtues cannot replace the lack of it here below. ~~The~~ Divine eye alone disregards it, and our good Emilchen, I am certain, has entered the kingdom of heaven even without the kiss of the graces.

As I remember her, she was a lank girl with dark hair, large black eyes, and a very large mouth with irregular, defective teeth. Her hands were large, too, and still larger were her feet, with which she struck out on all sides. If she wore laced shoes, a string was sure to be dangling from them, if buttoned shoes, a loose button. A few ends of hair were always looking out from her plaits, like grass in spring peeping from the ground; and stray locks fluttered over her forehead, which she vainly endeavored to push back with her hand or her elbow.

In the fairest weather she managed to splash mud high up on her dress by carelessly stepping into a gutter, and she was no less skilful in wiping off fresh paint with her coat

or shawl. In some inconceivable way, her hat would knock against a lamp in front of a shop, and it would gain very little in grace when she tried to restore its shape. If she wanted to fondle one of the little children of the family, she was certain to stick a finger in its eye, whereupon she would suffer more severely than the crying child itself. Despite her passionate entreaties, she was never allowed to carry the children about, because she was sure to stumble over a thread lying on the carpet. When she sat down, chance always put the most rickety chair under her body, and sent her sprawling on the floor.

During dancing lessons all the girls trembled for the flounces of their mull dresses. Her leaden steps threatened her neighbors without distinction of sex. For this reason, when the time came for the cavaliers to invite the ladies to a square dance, she sat alone pulling at her handkerchief, until the little dancing-master Albrecht resigned him-

self mutely to his fate of making up the missing couple with her.

But she bore all this without bitterness of spirit, and the name of Schlemihlchen, which she heard applied to her on every possible occasion, had long lost its sting. At the end of the dancing lesson she would embrace her girl friends so heartily that many a ruffle and nosegay adorning their bosom lost its life.

When the smallpox broke out in our city, happily in a mild form, Schlemihlchen, of course, was the first to get the disease—and it did not contribute to her beauty.

For her mother's birthday she bought new curtains, out of her own savings, for the windows in the "best room." She herself draped them in bold folds, and stepped back with artistic self-satisfaction to view them, holding a light in her hands. The fringes caught fire, the curtains and half the "best room" were burned, and for months after her hands, with which she had tried to stifle

the flames, had to be kept bound up in cumbersome wrappings.

Such was Schlemihlchen when she was sixteen years old.

A few years later her mother fell sick. It was a painful internal trouble, which long made her yearn for death as a relief. Emilchen nursed her with endless patience and tenderness. Though at times she poured the drugs over the sick woman's face instead of into her mouth, or burned her feet with the hot-water bottle shoved into the bed with too assiduous care, opinion was nevertheless unanimous, that she was a most affectionate daughter and a most tireless nurse.

The lovingkindness of Emilchen was celebrated everywhere by Schönchen the cook, or rather Jeanette, the name she preferred to go by ever since her cousin from Melsungen had come to the cattle market in the city, and called her Jeanette, to show that they knew high German in Melsungen, too. In the butcher's shop as well as at market

Jeanette declared that Emilchen was a veritable angel, that the dear Lord has regard to the heart and not to the hair-dress, and that she had earned her place in Gan-Eden, if only by her treatment of her mother.

After a long period of suffering, the mother died. It was on the eve of the Purim festival, when no one had time or inclination to pity her and Emilchen. The little the two women had possessed, had been spent upon physicians and drugs, and Emilchen would have been exposed to dire necessity, had not her guardian, old Uncle Marcus, come to her aid.

Uncle Marcus was her great-uncle as well as my own. He was an eccentric old bachelor, almost seventy years of age. His tall, lean figure was set on stork-like legs. A narrow head topped a neck which was very long and bent forward at a sharp angle, and a colossal nose of the racial type protruded from his yellow, beardless face, almost meeting his long pointed chin across

his narrow lips. His hair was white and thin. A long brown coat, many times turned, had been his trusted companion for a generation. The batiste neckerchief, worn in the fashion of the time folded twice about the neck, shone in such warm tones even in daylight that it seemed to have been gilded by the rays of the setting sun. When Cumberland conceived the character of Sheva, Uncle Marcus must have appeared to him in a dream.

He had a house at the corner of the "Graben," but he occupied only one room, at the end of the long corridor. The other rooms were vacant, if this can be said of spaces stuffed full with thousands of heterogeneous articles, antiques belonging to as many different branches of the business of his firm. For he dealt in everything. Piled up here in harmonious disorder lay furniture and riding-boots, pewter plates, Brabant lace, silver ingots, vitriol, embroidered officers' uniforms of the previous century, coins,

jewels, and "all such like things more," to use a phrase Uncle Marcus stuck into every sentence of his. Stored in his cellar were various assortments of wine to be sold wholesale and retail, and wood and coal, the octroi on which he farmed from the city. In addition he managed an office for all the German state lotteries, which earned for him the honorary title of Lottery Assessor.

No one knew how rich he was. Some thought him a miser, others a spendthrift. Both opinions were correct. So far as his own person was concerned, in matters of external show, he was a niggard. But he gave with a full hand to needy relatives and to the poor too self-respecting to beg. In each case, however, he followed his own choice and inclination. Before the festivals, boxes full of bottles of wine travelled secretly, without the name of the sender, into the houses of decent poor families, and when the bottles were uncorked, golden ducats were often found under the seals.

Yet his name was never to be seen in the lists of donors printed in the weekly paper, with public thanks for their magnanimous gifts.

The business of the Marcus firm was conducted by three men: the Assessor himself, who superintended its various branches and "all such like things more"; the clerk Bärmann, who entered as a Meshores, but came to be manager of the lottery office, and was given that dignified title by the customers of the house; and the driver Mewes, doing double service as teamster in hauling coal and wood, and as coachman in driving his master in a little carriage on high yellow wheels, drawn by a lean brown nag. He whizzed the vehicle so noisily through the city that old Levy dubbed it the "spinning wheel"; which name it bore until the end of its days.

It was characteristic of Uncle Marcus that he chose Schlemihlchen, the motherless girl devoid of all charm, as his ward and favor-

ite. Under the pretext of managing her inheritance, he brought her the "interest" on her money, making it amount to as much as she required for modest living. On Sundays he took her on drives in his "spinning wheel" to the Park and the neighboring villages, and on the road, with the smile of a prestidigitateur, he would draw wine, seltzer water, sugar, goblets, cakes, and fruit from the pockets of the coach.

He presented Emilchen with small articles of jewelry, lace, silk scarfs, and "all such like things more." When she lost or broke them, he would pretend not to notice it, as also when she descended from the "spinning wheel" and remained hanging on the step, and then fell as heavily as a sack of potatoes into the arms of old Mewes. In the evening he would visit her and stay with her for hours, telling her of his experiences and relating anecdotes from Meidinger's first edition, and "all such like things more." She smiled at them dutifully, while embroid-

ering a pair of slippers in cross-stitch for him.

Jeanette had sworn never to abandon her "mamsell." So, when she received a proposal of marriage from the cattle-dealer, her cousin from Melsungen, a conflict of duties arose. She finally decided to follow the inclination of her heart toward Melsungen, and Uncle Marcus eased the situation by asking his ward to keep house for him. She was given a front room one flight up, which had been cleared and fitted up for living purposes. And so Schlemihlchen presided over the Assessor's house on the "Graben."

After this happy turn in her fortune, the name of Schlemihlchen seems to have fallen into oblivion. Uncle did not call Emilchen by any name at all; the cook whom he hired—previously, the Marcus firm had gotten its meals from the eating-house—and old Mewes called her "Mamsell"; while Bärman never addressed her or referred to her otherwise than as Miss Katz.

In Bärmann, Emilchen found a quiet and passionate adorer. Kinship of external appearance formed a bond of mute sympathy between these two beings forsaken by the graces. He was by no means handsome, this Bärmann. He was small and thin, with legs forming a Gothic arch, and clothed in a pair of baggy black trousers shiny with age. Long, bony hands stuck from the short sleeves of his office coat, which were protected by linen oversleeves. The shaven beard imparted a tinge of blue to his pale face, and his eyes were bordered with a hem of purple like a *toga praetexta*. Over the steel frames of his eyeglasses, these eyes looked up to Miss Katz as to a higher being, and shone with gratitude when they turned toward her.

For she mended his underwear as well as that of her uncle (putting great industry and still greater stitches into her work); she darned his stockings like fish-nets; and she cut the poppy-seed cake that Jeanette sent

her from Melsungen in two, and wrapped up half for him to take to his mother. Moreover, when his mother, hunchbacked Jochebedchen, who peddled goose liver and cracklings, came to the house for the first time after Emilchen's installation, Miss Katz called her "Madam Bäermann," ushered her into the room, and poured out a glass of French wine for her. At this the son could restrain his emotion no longer, and his eyes overflowed like the glass of wine proffered by Schlemihlchen.

Gradually she also came to take a hand in the business of the firm. Fridays, when customers called for their half-pint of Kid-dush wine, she meted it out with just measure, and not infrequently spilled double the quantity over the funnel while trying to fill the bottle. In purchasing old pewter and brass she did not notice that the same articles were stolen from her six times over, and each time sold back to her again. But Uncle Marcus only smiled good-naturedly, for she

helped him faithfully and discreetly in his hidden benefactions, and always discovered new places where good might be done in secret.

Thus the two odd characters lived together in an ideal relationship, the old man clinging to her with ever increasing affection. The whole community felt assured either that Emilchen would be her rich uncle's sole heir, or else receive a magnificent dowry from him. Though old Levy declared that no one would be likely to buy the "cat" (Katz) in the bag, the Shadchonim came to Uncle Marcus more and more frequently, to make confidential inquiries as to Miss Katz and her dowry.

The old uncle met these gentlemen with great reserve. As far as he knew, he said, his ward had inherited but a small fortune from her mother, or perhaps none at all. He himself had a nephew, who, it was true, had been in America for many years, and from whom he had heard nothing for a long time.

Still he was his nearest relative, and he had bounden duties toward him, and "all such like things more." He would give his ward a fine outfit of linen, silverware, furniture, and "all such like things more," but as to anything else, he would reserve his decision until he found out who the man was who asked for her hand. He had no use at all for anyone who wanted her only for her dowry. She had a modest disposition, a good heart, and "all such like things more."

Thereupon the Shadchonim asked:

"How is business?" "Is the wheat crop in Westphalia good?" "Who won the great prize in the last Frankforter?" and "all such like things more." As to Emilchen, they inquired no further. Bärmann, who saw the familiar Shadchonim depart with long faces, breathed a sigh of relief, and wiped his nose blissfully on his writing cuffs.

But before the first year of the new era in the house at the "Graben" had elapsed,

an event occurred which stirred not only Uncle Marcus's household, but also the entire community. The Frankfort lottery had been drawn, and vague rumors were afloat of big prizes having fallen to the firm of Marcus. It was in the days before the telegraph, but a special courier of the Frankfort lottery bureau had arrived, a young official, for whom the Assessor called at the post-house in the Königsplatz in his "spinning wheel."

This messenger of good fortune, though burdened with the very prosaic name of Ochs, was of good family. His ancestral house in the Frankfort Judengasse probably bore the sign of an ox, from which the inmates had derived their name. He was well educated, and could discuss not only the Frankfort lottery, but also Goethe, Bettina, and Ariadne of Naxos. He consistently dropped the "n" at the end of the verb, in accordance with local custom.

The Assessor urged him to take some

lunch. Emilchen did the honors with smoked goose-breast and pickled cucumbers, and Mr. Ochs spoke of Goethe and Bettina. After the meal the young man, whose reddish side-whiskers were picturesquely set off by his blue cravat, made a most polite bow to Miss Katz, and accompanied the host to the room at the end of the corridor in order to compare the lists of lottery tickets with him. Most of the tickets had come out blank, a few with small winnings, two with a prize of a thousand dollars, and No. 2077, printed large in the list, with thirty thousand gulden.

On hearing this number read Uncle Marcus bent his neck and nose still lower over the list, then put his index finger to his forehead.

"Permit me a moment, Mr. Ochs," he said, as he rose, and he took from his desk an old leather note-book inscribed with all sorts of notes in Hebrew characters. "Right!" he cried, and a joyous smile wid-

ened the corners of his thin mouth. "It's No. 2077!"

Mr. Ochs looked at him, inquiringly.

"May I ask you, Mr. Assessor, whether there are any peculiar circumstances connected with this number which makes the situation doubtful?"

Uncle Marcus looked the interrogator up and down with his little eyes, as if to take the intellectual and spiritual measure of this young man, whose fine, sedate bearing quickly won for him the favor the old man was at any rate disposed to give a member of the Ochs family, which was well known to him. While another smile cut still deeper furrows in the wrinkles about his mouth, he said:

"I have no doubt at all on the subject, my dear Mr. Ochs, I know for a certainty that I gave No. 2077 as a gift to my ward Miss Katz, the girl you met a little while ago at lunch."

The eyes of Mr. Ochs opened wide—so

wide that the thirty thousand gulden and, everything else found their way to the very bottom of his heart, from which the image of Emilchen suddenly emerged as if painted upon a background of gold. He rose and seized the old man's hand with an air of unfeigned joy.

"I am perfectly delighted," he cried, "that the money remains in your family, Mr. Assessor. My people have always spoken of your family with such esteem. In point of fact, I confess it was only to become personally acquainted with you that I got the bureau to send me here, for, as you know, 'theory is gray, but the golden tree of life is green.'"

Mr. Marcus drew a wry face. He referred the "gray" to himself, and the "green" and "gold" to his ward. Mr. Ochs noticed the look, and blushed in some embarrassment. Then he put his white hand on his blue cravat in the region of his heart, and said:

"I must confess to you, Mr. Assessor, your ward made a deep impression upon me at the very first meeting. All they told me at home about her excellent character has been fully confirmed, and I feel myself drawn to her like the fisher in Goethe."

"My dear Mr. Ochs," Uncle Marcus returned, blowing his long nose with a red handkerchief, "I don't know that Fisher. The only Fisher I know is David Fisher, who has a lottery office in Fahr Street in Frankfort. But as to what concerns my ward, I will say this, 'handsome is as handsome does.' The girl has more common sense than she is credited with. She's modest, has a good heart, and all such like things more. What she has besides, you yourself know, and that won't be all, either. As to yourself, I don't ask you what you have, because I know you to be a young man of solid character and good family. So I hope the matter can be arranged. But do me this one favor—don't speak about the

lottery ticket and the prize. I want to keep it as a surprise at the end. Will you do us the honor to have dinner with us to-morrow?"

The next day the cook took a turkey to the slaughterer, and ordered a macaroon pyramid from Melli the confectioner, because Mr. Ochs was invited. Result: one topic of conversation in the entire community. "The Shiddech is true!"

"Whoever takes her must be an ox," said old Levy. "At any rate, they won't live like cat and dog."

While drawing the gobbler, the cook dropped a few unmistakable hints to Emilchen. Emilchen tapped the cook's shoulder with her broad hand.

"Silly!" she said.

Nevertheless she turned scarlet, and went upstairs to dress herself, for her uncle had told her with a significant smile:

"Put your Shabbes dress on."

She stood before the mirror smoothing

out her rebellious hair with quince bandoline, and fastening a red ribbon and a yellow rose in it. She pulled her dress to rights, and regarded herself as if lost in a dream. It seemed to her that she saw light-red whiskers and a dark-blue cravat in the mirror, and she shook her head as if to say:

“But is it possible?”

Suddenly, however, her thoughts recurred to her uncle, who had grown so accustomed to her, and who would now have to get his meals again with Bärmann from the eating-house. And she broke into convulsive sobs. Hot tears coursed down her cheeks, concerning which we are unable to say whether they were meant for her uncle or for Bärmann.

“It’s all the same to me!” she said, pulling herself together and wiping off her tears with her tulle cuff. “What Uncle Marcus decides for me, is certainly for my good. And, besides, it’s all a lot of silly gossip, and Mr. Ochs isn’t even thinking of me, I suppose.”

After all he must have thought of her, for he appeared in a black frock-coat and a spotlessly white vest, and he brought a bouquet of lilacs, which he offered her most politely. Not to offend the young man, she pinned it to her breast, large as it was.

The table was spread with the pyramid in the centre, but Uncle Marcus had not yet come, because he wanted to give the young couple an opportunity to pour out their hearts to each other. Which they proceeded to do, Mr. Ochs declaiming the *Zauberlehrling*. When the brooms got beyond control, he bawled so mightily that the cook in the kitchen cried out in fright:

“Great Heavens! The Chosen is killing the Kalle!”

Uncle Marcus appeared in the nick of time, accompanied by Bärmann, who had put on the coat he wore at his Bar-Mitzvah.

“Well, children, have you had your talk?” the uncle asked with a smile.

“We understand each other,” answered

Mr. Ochs, seizing Emilchen's hand, which shook as in a spasm.

They sat down to table. Emilchen ate little, Bärmann still less, though she pressed him most urgently to take more. With so much the greater boldness did Mr. Ochs fall to, in order to get to the dessert and the promised surprise as quickly as possible. They safely reached the pyramid, which crackled into ruins under the hand of the master of the house. Old Mewes, wearing large white cotton gloves, brought in and uncorked a bottle of *Liebfrauenmilch*. Mr. Ochs raised his glass, paused for a moment until Mewes left the room, hemmed and hawed, and spoke:

"Goethe says: 'O, happy the home where this is accounted but a small gift!' This wine is baptized after *Liebe Frauen* ('dear women'). Excuse me, Mr. Assessor, I don't mean to say anything has been baptized in your house. God forbid. I only want to say that I propose this toast to the

health of all dear women, and very, very particularly to the health of your dear niece, Miss Emilie!" He waved the glass toward Emilchen, who trembled violently, and he continued with growing pathos: "Yes, Miss Emilie, from the very first moment I cast my eyes upon you, everything about you made a profound impression upon me. Goethe, no, Schiller says, 'The inclination of the heart is the voice of destiny.' And so, Miss Emilie, I appeal to your heart, and ask whether you would say the word 'yes,' whether you would unite your destiny with mine?"

He wiped his forehead with an immaculate batiste handkerchief, and looked expectantly at Emilchen, the inclination of whose heart betrayed itself by the visible shaking of the upper part of her body.

"Speak, my child," said Uncle Marcus, tenderly.

Emilchen, who dared not look either to the right, at Mr. Ochs, or to the left, at Bär-

mann, raised her eyes to the old man's kindly face, and said in a moved voice :

"You are my guardian and my benefactor, and what you decide for me, must be for my good."

"I have nothing against it," said Uncle Marcus. "Mr. Ochs is a fine man, and wants to make you his wife, though he knows you have no money—a thing not one in ten would do nowadays!" He winked his eye at the bridegroom, who understood him, and broke in with

"No filthy lucre, it's your heart, Miss Emilchen!"

Emilchen's eyes filled with tears. She extended her hand across the table to the handsome, unworldly young wooer, overturning a wine glass as she did it, and sending it rolling to the floor, where it broke into bits.

"There you have it!" cried Uncle Marcus, laughing aloud. "The glass broke itself as a sign of your betrothal! Mazel and Broche!"

Bärmann wanted to rise, but his Gothic legs refused to serve him, and he remained rooted to his seat. Mr. Ochs, however, put his arms about the girl, and kissed her on the forehead, whereat one red whisker stuck to the quince bandoline on her black coiffure, an omen that augured well for the attachment of their souls.

A storm is usually followed by calm. The passionate declaration was succeeded by a pause, during which Mr. Ochs crunched the ruins of the pyramid, while Uncle Marcus began with apparent indifference:

“Tell me, Emilchen, didn’t I once give you a Frankfort lottery ticket?”

“You’ve given me so many things, Uncle, that I really can’t recall at this moment.”

“Think, child, a Frankfort lottery ticket, No. 2077.”

“You gave me two tickets, Uncle Marcus, one, if I remember rightly, at my birthday, and one at Pesach. You wished I might draw a great prize with them.”

"Quite right," observed the old man, smiling. "One was a Brunswicker, the other a Frankforter, No. 2077."

"You're probably right, Uncle."

"Go, child, please, and fetch both of them."

Emilchen became embarrassed.

"Both?" she stammered.

Mr. Ochs pricked up his ears.

"Why not?" asked Uncle Marcus.

"Because—because I have only one of them. I gave Jeanette the other, when she was married."

Mr. Ochs turned pale.

"Go and see," cried the uncle with more temper than Emilchen had ever seen him display.

Bärman had found his legs again. He rose, and with outstretched neck he followed Emilchen with his eyes, as she hurried, trembling, to the bureau and fumbled at the keyhole. After great difficulty she finally opened the drawer, took out a small

leather pocket-book, and opened it, her hands all a-tremble; for she was greatly disconcerted by the strangely expectant eyes turned upon her.

When lots are to decide on life and death in a so-called "American duel," the tension of the participants can be no greater than Mr. Ochs's, as he fixed his eyes, fairly starting from their sockets, upon the ticket Emilchen was now unfolding. The girl little suspected her destiny depended upon it. With the keen gaze of an eagle Mr. Ochs deciphered it before it was quite opened. Like the "mene, mene, tekel, upharsin," the words stared at him in flaming letters:

"Herzogl. Braunschweigische Staatslotteriel"

The other ticket, the big one, the thirty thousand gulden ticket, had fled to Mel-sungen. Emilchen had given it away to the cook! Exactly! Schlemihlchen had remained true to herself.

Mr. Ochs paled to the tips of his ears, and

actually shrank in size. Bärmann, on the other hand,—a man grows with his aims—Bärmann suddenly stretched himself in spite of the frock-coat he had outgrown, and threw a triumphant look over his glasses at the crushed wooer. Emilchen handed her uncle the ill-fated Brunswicker, and looked at him questioningly.

“Well, well,” he answered her look calmly, “I only wanted to know. Lucky Jeanette,” he fixed his eyes upon Mr. Ochs, “lucky Jeanette, if *filthy lucre* makes one happy. What do *you* think, Mr. Ochs?”

Mr. Ochs coughed, as if a piece of the pyramid had stuck in his throat, held the batiste handkerchief to his mouth, and looked over it at Emilchen, now suddenly transformed from a picture upon a golden background into a dull black silhouette. Emilchen, however, who like the pious Fridolin was innocent of everything, hastened to the table, poured out a glass of wine, and regarding him compassionately said:

“Won’t you take a drink? There’s something in your throat.”

“Thank you,” Mr. Ochs stammered, “the wine sent the blood to my head. I’m not used to strong drinks, and I must confess, when I’ve had wine I say all sorts of things that—I—that—”

“That you regret when sober,” Uncle Marcus concluded. “An old story! When the blood mounts to the head, one speaks all such like things more, and God forbid I should take anyone at his word in such circumstances!”

Mr. Ochs drew a breath of relief.

“Mr. Assessor,” he said, “I know a man of your character and your position will not let his plans and purposes depend upon a single lottery ticket—”

Uncle Marcus interrupted him.

“You’re talking about business? Very well. We still have the accounts to settle before you go. Will you please step into the office with me?”

He arose. Mr. Ochs followed suit. He seized his hat, and bowed politely to Emilchen, who stood at the table motionless, and looked at the departing guest as if waking from a dream.

When the two men had left the room, Bärmann came up to her, and grasped her hand.

"You must thank God, Miss Katz!" he cried in a voice quivering with emotion.

"I don't understand," Emilchen faltered.

"You don't understand? Well, then, I'll tell you. That man proposed to you because he thought you had won thirty thousand gulden on the Frankfort ticket."

Emilchen's eyes lighted up with joy.

"Thirty thousand gulden!" she cried, "What luck for my poor Jeanette!"

Bärmann looked at her, and wiped his eyes with the sleeve of his frock-coat.

"Miss Katz, you're a jewel! God has placed the great prize in your heart. Don't think any more of that man Ochs, and don't

feel hurt. I don't know what Goethe says, but I know the Sechus of your sainted mother stood by you to-day!"

Again passing his coat sleeve over his eyes, Bärmann walked from the room without looking around.

Emilchen stood there illuminated, not struck, by a flash of lightning.

"I might have thought of that myself!" she said softly, regarding her face in the mirror opposite.

She picked up the broken bits of glass from the floor, and opened the bureau drawer, but before locking the pocket-book away, she laid a twig from the bouquet of lilacs into it as a reminder and as a warning. Then she wrote a hearty note of congratulation to Jeanette upon having drawn the great prize.

The next day when the community learned that Mr. Ochs had departed, and the Shid-dech had come to nothing, old Levy said:

"My God, what luck that man Ochs

must have! Once a Schlemihl, always a Schlemihl, but an Ochs is not always an ox."

A few days later Uncle Marcus called Emilchen into his room, and read her a paper, which he then sealed in her presence. On the back he wrote a word she did not understand. But with tears in her eyes, she carried the paper into her room. On opening the drawer her eyes fell on the dried-up lilac blossoms. She placed the paper by their side, and as if seized with a resolve, or actuated by a vow, she buried the pocket-book out of sight under her clothes and ribbons. On the back of the paper was written in large sprawling letters the word "Codicil."

Autumn passed uneventfully. Jeanette came to the cattle market, and brought her child along to show it to her benefactress and ask her blessing upon it. She had named it Emilchen. The girl pressed her little namesake tenderly to her bosom, almost choking it.

Winter came, and with it Purim. Emilchen would have preferred to pass the anniversary of her mother's death alone, but Uncle Marcus had invited their relatives to partake of some punch, for which he possessed a specially fine recipe, and she could not think of interfering with his pleasure. As he ladled out the first glass from the bowl with the pride of an artist in his work, the spoon suddenly fell from his hand, and he sank unconscious to the floor. The old man of seventy was struck by a fit of apoplexy. An hour later the heart that had silently cherished so many noble feelings ceased to beat. For the second time the festival was turned into a day of mourning for Emilchen.

In the general confusion that ensued, she was the first to regain her self-possession. After every restorative had been tried, and the physicians declared an attempt to bring back life futile, she made all the necessary arrangements in the disturbed household.

She sent the abundant remnants of the feast to the almshouse, and cleared the room for the body and the watchers, who had to "learn" day and night at its side.

The decisive moment seemed to have given calm and poise to her timid, spasmodic nature. She followed the body on foot up to the gate of the "good place," which it is not customary for women to enter with a funeral cortege, and gave her own savings to the clamoring beggars. On her return she stopped for a moment before the door of the house now without its master, as if she wanted to ask:

"May I still consider myself at home here?"

Bärmann came up to her with tearful eyes, and led her silently to the door of her room. "Miss Katz," he said in a choking voice, "don't wear yourself out too much. You have the consciousness of having cared for Mr. Marcus—peace be with him!—like his own child, and he will remember you in

the world to come as he probably did on earth. The authorities have put Mr. Marcus's room and office under seal, but I know he left a will. I know where it is, and it will be opened this afternoon. Why do you hesitate to enter the house, Miss Katz? Am I not here still, also? Who knows which one of us will have the right to invite the other to remain?"

Emilchen pressed his hand, and locked herself into her room, refusing to see the numerous callers who came to offer condolences. Tearless and silent she sat there a long time, resting her face upon her hands and recalling the image of her benefactor with all his singular traits and characteristics. She nodded her head with a friendly smile, as if listening again to his anecdotes, to the stories of his experiences, and "all such like things more."

In the afternoon the city counsellor arrived, and with him Alsberg, the attorney of the Jewish community. They broke the

seal on the room of the deceased, and Bärmann handed over the keys of the desk, which he had found in Uncle Marcus's clothes. The testament lay on top in the first drawer. On the envelope was written:

“To be opened in the presence of my ward Emilie Katz.”

Emilchen was summoned. On entering the empty chamber, where the familiar face of her uncle had always greeted her, a shudder passed through her whole body, and she seemed to be threatened with one of her convulsive attacks. Bärmann caught both her hands, and held her until she regained composure. While the city counsellor opened the will and read it, her gaze wandered over all the familiar objects, as if in search of the old face, grotesque, yet so dear to her.

The will provided that Bärmann should continue to conduct the business, drawing the same salary as before; that in addition he was to receive a legacy of ten thousand

thalers; that he should make an inventory, in order to determine the value of the deceased's property, since it was impossible for the testator to do this, on account of the many outstanding monies owing to him, and the piled-up stock, which it was difficult to estimate; that he should take up his residence in the house, and manage everything with his usual fidelity for the legal heir. As such he designated, for the present, his nephew Jacob Marcus—place of residence unknown, probably in America—if still living and a decent man. Notice should be given him through German and American newspapers. If within three years the heir did not appear, either in person or by proxy, Bärmann was to enter into all his rights. In the meantime he should have full control of the business, as well as of the house, and act in all things as he thought "accorded with the spirit of the testator." Uncle Marcus made no definite bequests to the Jewish and Christian charitable institutions, leaving

this matter also for Bärmann to decide, "in the spirit of the testator."

Not a word was said about Emilie Katz. The will, in fact, antedated the time when her uncle had made himself her guardian. So much the more inexplicable was the superscription:

"To be opened in the presence of my ward."

Bärmann listened to the reading of the will with feverish suspense. He seemed almost not to have heard the provisions made for himself, nor paid attention to the brilliant prospects opened up to him. He waited impatiently for what was coming, and when no more came, and the city counsellor folded up the will, his legs trembled violently, and he had to sit down. He stared from over his glasses at Emilchen, who sat there dazed. A long, painful pause followed the reading of the will.

"Am I wanted here still?" Emilchen asked in a moved voice.

The city counsellor shook his head.

Bärmann was too dumbfounded to ask her to stay when she walked out, casting a melancholy glance about the desolate room. Suddenly he jumped up.

"It's impossible!" he cried. "There must be another paper. This will be of an early date."

He opened the desk, pulled out all the papers, and drew every drawer open ten times over.

"Impossible!" he repeated again and again. "No legacy for his ward, not a word about Miss Katz! And she herself says nothing and knows nothing. Inconceivable! What is your opinion, gentlemen, is it possible?"

"That's not for the city official to decide," answered the counsellor, rising and buttoning his coat.

"Well, well," interjected attorney Alsborg, a handsome man with kind dark eyes, "I understand your utter amazement, Mr.

Bärmann, for I knew the excellent man personally. But I want to call your attention to a passage in the will upon which you seem not to lay sufficient stress. The testator has given you full and immediate control over both the house and the business, and desires you to act in what you regard to be his spirit. He took the future of his ward out of his own hands, and laid it in yours. It seems to me to be one of the old gentleman's eccentricities. I don't want to be so indiscreet," he added smiling, "as to express myself more distinctly, but you understand me, Mr. Bärmann."

"Not quite," stammered Bärmann, the blood suddenly mounting to his pale face. "But I thank you a thousand times, Mr. Alsberg, for your comforting suggestion."

He squeezed Mr. Alsberg's fleshy hand heartily, and the two men parted.

An hour later the news of the strange will was bruited about in the city.

"Schlemihlchen remains a Schlemihlchen," was the general comment.

"Why?" said old Levy. "Bärmann will marry her. In any event, he won't run *straight* into his misfortune"—with reference to his arched legs.

A few days afterward Bärmann wanted to ask Emilchen if she did not know of any subsequent provisions by her uncle, and he began to speak about the will, but she resolutely turned the conversation aside.

"It is painful to me," she said, "to speak about such things during the Shive, which is appointed as a time to be devoted to the memory of the dead. From what I have gathered—for God knows my thoughts were elsewhere—I should say it is your duty to find the legal heir, and in the meantime see to it that his inheritance is conscientiously administered. I am sure you will carry out my uncle's will faithfully, Mr. Bärmann, and I'm sure"—she seized his hand—"I'm sure also you won't abandon a poor girl."

Bärmann's eyes filled with tears.

"You're mistaken, Miss Katz. It is my duty for the present to manage the estate of Mr. Marcus, peace be with him, in accordance with his spirit. In which case you are the mistress of the house, and must remain so until further developments."

He bowed and walked away.

Emilchen followed him with her eyes for a while, then ran to her bureau, where she remained standing.

"It is better so," she said, casting a moist glance in the mirror.

Bärmann went to work with redoubled zeal, inspired by his esteem for the living and the dead. The inventory was drawn up with the help of a temporary bookkeeper, the chaotic pile of goods was assorted and sold at public auction, fresh life rejuvenated the old business. Bärmann seemed to have acquired ten hands and ten feet, his former hesitancy made way to feverish activity and determination. The result of his efforts

exceeded his own expectations. It appeared that Mr. Marcus had left a considerable fortune.

Bärmann did not think of withdrawing his legacy from the business. He regarded himself as a silent partner of the future heir, who still remained enveloped in mysterious darkness. The notices had been appearing in the papers for a long time, but so far had produced no clue to the lost man.

At the urgent request of Emilchen, hunch-backed Jochebedchen, Bärmann's mother, was installed in one of the rooms now made vacant. Emilchen had made this the condition of her remaining in the house. The old woman accepted the invitation with the proviso that the cook should be dismissed, and she be allowed henceforth to hold sway in the kitchen. From now on her goose livers and cracklings were produced for home consumption only. The respectful and affectionate manner with which Emilchen

treated Mrs. Bärmann was returned by almost divine adoration.

"Lord, what a pearl, what a Tachshid Mamsell Katz is!" she exclaimed every day to her son, who never contradicted her.

Every evening Mrs. Jochebedchen calculated the days since the notice for Jacob Marcus had begun to appear in the papers. Each day that did not bring him was like a day won for her anxious heart. If the limit of time set by the will should pass by, thus she dreamed, if that man were dead, or if he had fallen in with the wild Indians in America and had disappeared, if the house and the entire fortune should pass over to her son, then, even if Feidel or Goldschmidt should offer him a daughter with a hundred thousand, he ought not to marry any other than Mamsell Katz, even though she be ten times disinherited and a Schlemihlte. For she knew too well what was secretly gnawing at the poor young man's heart, and God the Almighty would be sensible enough not

to prefer a vagabond to so good a son as hers.

These were the thoughts of Mrs. Jochebedchen of an evening when she sat down at the fire-place with folded arms after having washed the dishes. By day she was seized with alarm whenever a stranger entered the house. Suspecting the loathed creature in every unfamiliar face, she would waddle to the front door whenever it opened, wiping her fat hands on her apron.

"Who are you?" she cried out to every new-comer, and a stone fell from her surcharged heart when the answer came,

"Rosenbaum," "Lilienfeld," or "Blumenthal."

As the year wore on, her hopes grew in proportion, and she began to assume a sort of protecting attitude toward Emilchen.

"You will see, Mamsell Katz," she said, "what my son is. My son is no ox." And she smiled with a mixed sense of pride and condescension.

A second year passed. The house at the "Graben" had undergone no change, save that the business kept constantly increasing, and large prizes were repeatedly paid out through the firm of Marcus, whereby the lottery office continued to gain in custom.

Emilchen's Brunswicker was also drawn, but it turned up blank.

Purim came again. This day of double mourning had ceased to be a feast of joy for the poor girl. It filled her with superstitious dread; which is readily comprehensible. She longed for the day to end. But this time it passed without any mischance, unless it could be accounted a mischance that the little weekly which appeared in the evening announced, among the arrivals in the city, James Marcus of Baltimore, at the Hotel "Zum Ritter."

Emilchen had not read the paper, nor, of course, had Mrs. Jochebedchen. In the consciousness of security, the old woman had long ceased to rush to the door to meet

strangers; and the next day, when a man of scarcely thirty years entered the corridor, and inquired for Mr. Bärmann, she very accommodately showed him the door to the office. He was a sturdy, stocky fellow with high color in his face, framed by two short strips of side-whiskers. He was dressed in high leather boots and a short brown bear skin coat, such as is worn by the farmers and the cattle-dealers of the region. But the sharp eye of Mrs. Jochebed had not overlooked a diamond pin, a thick, gold, watch-chain, and a huge seal-ring on his massive hand. So scenting a good piece of business, she obsequiously opened the door of the office for him, where her son met him with a pen stuck behind his ear.

"Mr. Bärmann?" asked the stranger in a foreign accent.

"Yes, sir," replied Bärmann. "Whom have I the honor to speak to?" he continued, as he led the stranger into the office.

"O, don't you know me any more, Mr.

Bärmann? I am James, or rather, Jacob Marcus."

Mrs. Jochebedchen caught the name as the door closed after her. It was a knife-thrust through her heart.

"Shem Yishmerenu!" she cried, and she had to cling to the balustrade for support. He had come, the dreaded spectre, clothed in living flesh!

The man who had so suddenly and so rudely shattered her hopes was the son of old Marcus's brother. His father had been a trader who carried his wares from farm to farm, and had his home in a little provincial town.

All the time that Uncle Marcus, who had come to the capital from the same little town, was painfully working his way upward, he supported his brother and honestly shared his savings with him. The claims of his brother's family grew with his own wealth, but he resisted them stubbornly, and reduced them to within very modest bounds. It was

one of the peculiarities of the old man to have no more "heart" for his own folk than for those who were remote from him.

"Let them exert themselves," he said. "I've had to work hard myself, and I won't let them skin me," and "all such like things more."

When the brother died, Uncle Marcus, after long hesitation, resolved to take his only son into his house. Jacob, then sixteen years old, was a callow youth, untrained both spiritually and intellectually. He at once began to look upon himself as heir to the house, and since his allowance of pocket-money was in truth somewhat too scant, he incurred debts in his uncle's name, and went about to cafés and dancing halls. He gave the old man's sense of economy such great offence that violent quarrels often broke out between the two.

The uncle refused to pay the young fellow's debts, and threatened to leave him in the hands of public justice. In the end his

kind heart prevailed, but inwardly he felicitated everybody who had no relatives.

Jacob was scarcely available in the business, and as the uncle gradually lost all confidence in him, he took the fatherless boy Bärmann in as his assistant. Bärmann soon made himself indispensable to the old man, by his industry, intelligence, and modesty. This was too much for Jacob, and he purposely provoked quarrels and brutal scenes. Once when the old man talked to him rather strongly, he forgot himself so far as to turn upon his benefactor with insolent abuse. The next morning Uncle Marcus gave him the receipted bills for all his debts and a moderate sum of money, with the order to leave his house, and never come in his sight again. The boy left, spite in his heart, without taking leave of his uncle.

Bärmann was consumed with remorse. He blamed himself for having separated relatives, perhaps forever. Though he felt innocent, he tormented himself with the

thought that he might be suspected of having brought about this end for selfish reasons. He constantly endeavored to appease the uncle, and was unremitting in hunting up traces of Jacob's whereabouts. He succeeded in getting the information that Jacob had gone to America, and there, in the country of labor, had learned to work. Bärmann had a boyhood friend of his in New York, a watchmaker, visit Jacob, and deliver a letter to him, in which he begged him most heartily to repent and return home to his family. Besides, the letter contained a part of Bärmann's savings. The answer came after a long lapse of time. Jacob returned the money, and wrote he needed no charity, either from his family or, still less, from strangers. What he needed he himself earned, and he no longer had to concern himself about anybody. However, he wished his uncle health and long life.

These last words, which Bärmann read out triumphantly, touched the old man. The

self-confidence of the young man who had learned to work for his bread, he considered a radical improvement. The pride with which he turned back a stranger's assistance brought a satisfied smile to his lips. He made Bärmann write him another letter in his name, in which he asked him to return to his "paternal home." But this letter, as well as all sent subsequently, remained unanswered. Though he never spoke of his nephew, the old man thought of him with secret sorrow and quiet self-reproach. All alone as he was, he sometimes felt the ingratitude or the lovelessness of strangers, or their greed and self-seeking under the guise of tenderness. Then his conscience smote him for the severity with which he had treated his only relative. It was probably when in this mood that he drew up his will.

Jacob, according to the account he later gave, had used the money his uncle had given him to buy a steerage passage on an emigrant ship that carried its unhappy cargo from

Hamburg to New York. With only a few dollars in his pocket he entered the harbor of the huge city, where every man has time and interest only for himself. Everything was strange to him, even the language, and he had learned no trade. But he had hands, and right powerful hands, which in the land of business could easily be turned into capital.

At first he spent every cent of his earnings on drink, and often had to seek his night's lodging under the open sky. Necessity, however, teaches man not only how to pray but also how to save. Jacob involuntarily drew a comparison between the low-down drunkards and paupers, and the sober, industrious self-made men to whom the highest offices are open in the land of freedom. His sound judgment gradually prevailed over his brutal inclinations. An ideal arose before his vision, the dazzling god worshipped in America above everything else. His aim became "to make money." The

gold mines of California had been discovered; thousands of pilgrims streamed to the god's new miraculous shrine. Jacob was swept along in the current; and in the mines of California disappeared from the view and the quest of his European friends.

After a number of years he returned east with his booty, to Baltimore, where he settled down as Mr. James Marcus, dealer in cattle and hides. It was in Baltimore that he read the notice summoning him home as the heir of his uncle.

An expression of joy unalloyed by any other feeling flitted across the lean face of Bärmann when he heard the name of Jacob Marcus. He looked over his glasses at the stout figure, not failing to notice the glittering diamond scarf pin that had so impressed his mother. He soon distinguished the features of his old acquaintance in the browned countenance, and put out both hands to him heartily.

"Thank God you are here, Mr. Marcus! You don't look, *unbeschrieen*, as if you needed your sainted uncle's fortune."

"So far as that's concerned, Mr. Bär-mann," returned Mr. James, sticking his broad hands up to the thumbs into his trousers' pockets, "you know best of all that I haven't grown fat from what my uncle gave me. I've had to toil and moil and undergo all kinds of hardships, while you earned your money sitting quietly behind your desk. If I had died over there like a dog, he wouldn't have cared. He always did more for strangers than for his own. At least, his money shall not fall into strange hands now that he's dead. But," he continued, seeing the pained expression on Bär-mann's face, "it's my principle to let by-gones be by-gones. I didn't come here on a 'sentimental journey.' I came here on business. I placed my papers in the city court and in the hands of the Jewish attorney, and they found them all right. I've also read the

will. Now, to settle the matter as quickly as possible, I came here myself, though I know my appearance won't make a pleasant impression upon you."

"You're mistaken, Mr. Marcus," answered Bärmann, placing his hand on his heart, either from a desire to affirm his statement or to restrain its violent beating. "You're mistaken! God is my witness. If you think such a thing you insult your sainted uncle in his grave. It was his wish as well as mine. But you're right. It's better for us to get down to business at once. The books are ready for your inspection. With the help of God, the fortune your uncle left you has increased considerably. You can see for yourself what it amounts to now, because I've kept things in shape so that at any moment I could give you a complete account. If you look into this ledger"—he opened a folio volume bound in green linen—"and deduct the sum left me by my noble benefactor from the value of the property at that

time, and discount it in proper ratio from its present value, then all the rest, including the house, is your undisputed possession."

Mr. James leaned both elbows on the desk, and ran his eyes through the ledger with the air of an auditor. He whipped a gold pencil from his trousers' pocket, wrote down a series of numbers on the pad, and began to multiply and divide, murmuring German and English numbers in motley promiscuity.

"At what do you value the house?" he asked without interrupting his calculations.

"Fifteen thousand thalers is the estimate placed upon it," Bärmann answered with business-like imperturbability.

Mr. James drew a thick line under his calculations, and threw down the pencil scornfully.

"Is that all? The old man was reputed a millionaire."

"Have the books verified in court," Bärmann answered curtly and sharply. His blood boiled. All the brutal scenes through

which he had passed on the same spot rose to his memory again, and he recognized the insolent lines around the mouth that had once uttered insult against his noble benefactor.

James Marcus planted himself squarely, and stuck his beringed hand into his vest-pocket.

“ Well, that would be the best way to clear the matter up. I have no desire to stop here long, still less to settle here, and keep up this frippery concern. Money yields a better rate of interest in America. I'll let the city office appoint a representative to audit the books, and sell the house and business. And now,” he concluded, taking his hat, “ I think everything between us is all right.”

Bärmann held him back by the arm, and said calmly :

“ Not everything yet. There's still one matter to be arranged between us, a duty of piety toward your sainted uncle, a duty of gratitude toward a person—”

James interrupted him brusquely. His broad forehead turned purple.

"Let me alone!" he cried. "Don't speak to me about piety and gratitude. Don't remind me of the treatment I received in this house. I owe nobody any piety. I'm under obligations to nobody. If I didn't starve to death, I, the only relative of the old miser, it was because of these two hands. And with these hands I'll take what is mine, and I'll not let myself be cheated out of one single penny. I'm a stranger in this house, and let him who made me a stranger answer for it. It's been your duty up to this time to manage the property, and you have nothing to speak to me about except business."

He struck the table a blow with his fist that set it trembling. Bärmann trembled still more violently as he replied in jerky monosyllables:

"What I am telling you about is also business, Mr. Marcus. It concerns a debt of honor not marked down in these books."

"What is it?" James asked more calmly.

"It's about Miss Katz."

"Miss Katz? Who's Miss Katz?"

"The daughter of a relative, the widow Katz. You probably remember her. Your uncle was guardian of her daughter, and took her into his house a few years before his death."

A cynical smile flitted across the broad lips of the American.

"She cared for your uncle," Bärmann continued with growing warmth, "as tenderly as a daughter. She replaced the affection of his own kith and kin, the lack of which he always felt so keenly."

"Remarkable!" returned James with a sneer that showed his large teeth. "The will does not mention a word about Miss Katz."

Bärmann was silent a moment, taken aback.

"That's just the point—" he continued.

"He must have provided for her so much

the better in his lifetime," James sneered again.

"He didn't give her a single penny!" cried Bärmann, indignantly. "And I forbid you to cast aspersions on the girl with such insinuations! He instructed me as executor of the estate to manage it in his spirit, and I invited Miss Katz to remain in this house. So now it is your duty to provide for her future, for it ill becomes you to turn your uncle's ward summarily out of doors by selling this house. In the name of the dead I forbid you to do it."

Mr. James stuck his hands into his trousers' pockets, and calmly surveying the little man who wanted to impress him, said with a sarcastic smile:

"Don't make yourself ridiculous, Bärmann. If you have entered upon my uncle's inheritance in such a way that you have even retained Miss Katz in your house, it's none of my business."

"What do you mean by that?" cried Bär-

mann, pressing his clenched fist to his breast.

"I mean to tell you," James answered with a threatening look, "that I hope you have supported Miss Katz out of your own legacy. Otherwise I should have to get the city to investigate how much my property has been reduced through you, or how much I have been cheated of by this lady. You understand me, Mr. Bärmann?"

Bärmann did understand him. All the blood left his face, and he was unable to utter a word. His tongue was paralyzed. But when James took up his hat to go, he jumped upon him in one bound, like a tiger, and convulsively dug his fingers into the sinewy arms of the American.

"Come with me!" he thundered.

"Where to?" asked James, visibly taken aback by the little man's violence.

"Come with me!" cried Bärmann, pulling the door open; and holding to the balustrade with one hand, he dragged the resisting James after him with the other.

"Where to?" cried James again.

"To Miss Katz," answered Bärmann.

The sound of the name seemed to restore his self-command. He leaped up the stairway in a few springs, and before the astounded American had time to tear himself from his grasp, he was knocking violently at a door. A soft "come in" was the response, and the next moment the two men stood before Emilchen.

She was sitting at the window, at work with a thick wooden needle, crocheting a red woolen shawl for Bärmann. When the two men entered, she rose in surprise. Mr. James cast a rapid glance at the girl's homely figure. As always when surprised, Emilchen was trembling violently. A sudden recollection of the Schlemihlchen of old brought an ironic smile to his broad lips, which did not escape Bärmann. Whatever interpretation he put upon it, it added still further to his exasperation. At that moment he was no longer the Meshores of old, but

the representative of his master and benefactor, and energetic self-confidence steeled every fibre of his being. A gleam of knight-hood flashed from the eyes of the little Jewish youth, as from the eyes of David when the insolent Goliath taunted him.

Mr. Marcus, with the civility of an American toward ladies, came up to Emilchen with a "how do you do," and extended his hand to her. But Bärmann quickly placed himself between them, and endeavoring with difficulty to speak in a calm voice said:

"Miss Katz, this man, Mr. Jacob Marcus,"—Emilchen started with delight at the mention of the name—"this man does not come to you as a relative and friend. He has declared himself a stranger in this house. By the language he has used, he has forfeited all rights on your welcome." Emilchen clutched at the table-cloth convulsively, and crushed it in her hand. "He comes as a business man," continued Bärmann, "and thinks you and I have reduced his fortune.

Tell him yourself whether in the lifetime of your uncle you—”

He could not proceed, for Emilchen grew deathly pale, her crocheting fell from her hands, and she seemed on the point of collapsing. James pushed a chair under her.

“It’s not my fault, Miss Katz,” he said, “if you are questioned in this way. I simply asked Mr. Bärmann whether in the lifetime of my uncle—”

“Repeat your suspicion. Go ahead!” cried Bärmann. “Tell Miss Katz to her face what you dared to say behind her back! You refuse to say anything, Miss Katz? You are right. Let him find out for himself what you possess, you who for years took his place so modestly in this house, and made no demands for yourself. You, sir, take the keys, examine her chests and drawers, as you did my books, and see whether you have been cheated. Take everything. Miss Katz doesn’t want any of your property.”

"No, I don't, not a thing!" cried Emilchen. "Take everything Uncle gave me!"

Bärmann opened his eyes wide, and the American measured him with a look of triumphant superiority.

"What are you talking about?" Bärmann cried, paling. "What did you receive from your uncle? Speak! For God's sake, answer!"

But Emilchen did not answer. She hid her face in both arms on the table, and her head whirled with chaotic thoughts. In obedience to a silent vow, she had kept a certain thing secret from everybody for years. Was she to expose it now to one from whom the tenderest feelings of her heart had prompted her to conceal it? Expose it now in the presence of another, whose brutality made her own feelings seem inexpressible to her and incomprehensible?

Bärmann waited with trembling, uplifted hands, and James feasted his eyes on her embarrassment.

“Let it go!” he cried with an arrogant air of magnanimity. “Don’t you see how confused Miss Katz is? I don’t care to search the house!”

“But you shall!” Bärmann cried, beside himself with rage, the swelling veins on his pale forehead showing dark blue. “If you misinterpret the confusion of an outraged heart according to your own base thoughts, then you shall at least stand abashed before her poverty. Here, look!” He seized the brass handles of the bureau, and shook the drawer so violently that the lock jumped open with a crash. “Here, see the wealth she has accumulated, the wealth of which you have been robbed!”

“Hold on!” cried James. “What right have you to mix in the affairs of Miss Katz?”

“What right?” answered Bärmann, glowing with his love for her. “Because I know this girl, and respect her, this poor girl whose only wealth is in her heart. Do

you think because I kept quiet when you insulted your noble uncle and myself, do you think I am going to let you insult this woman? Why, if you hadn't returned, and I had been encouraged by what I inherited from her uncle, I'd have made her my—"

The word died on his lips. He did not see that Emilchen suddenly arose, and fixed her large eyes upon him. He saw only his inner ego suddenly issuing forth, and it frightened him. With a violence that concealed his confusion, he hurled himself upon the bureau, and began to fling out its sorry store of faded ribbons and worthless lace. "There, take it! Take it!" he cried. "Miss Emilchen wants nothing from you any more. Drive her out of the house of your benefactor. Miss Katz needs no other protector than—"

His fingers grabbed a pocket-book, which he pulled out and opened. A dried flower fell on the floor, a large folded envelope lay within. With the quick eye of a falcon the

American spied the paper, and seized it hastily. Emilchen wanted to run up to him, but her feet remained rooted to the floor. Bärmann stared over his glasses at the superscription on the envelope. In the large helpless hand of old Marcus he saw the single word "Codicil."

He felt as though he had awakened from a nightmare. His wizened fingers made a grab between the stout hands of his opponent, and drew the paper out of its envelope.

"Read it!" he cried. The command sounded like a shout of joy.

James began to read to himself, while Bärmann read out loud:

"To my dear ward Emilie Katz, who tended me so faithfully and disinterestedly in the last years of my life, and replaced the affection which my own relatives denied me, I bequeath thirty thousand Rhenish gulden in cash as restitution for the Frankfort lottery ticket the winnings of which I wanted to present to her. If she should not desire

to withdraw the money from the business immediately after my death, she is to receive the current rate of interest upon it from the day of my death. Furthermore, I desire my heir, whoever he may be, to let her have the apartment one flight up in my house at the 'Graben' and wood, light, and all such like things more to the blessed end of her life.

"Isaiah Marcus, guardian of the orphan Emilie Katz."

This was followed by the date and the seal of the notary, Dr. Karl Nebelthau.

A pause. During which Bärmann regarded Emilchen as if she were a riddle, while Emilchen sank her eyes as if ashamed of the discovery, and James folded the paper looking in amazement at the incomprehensible girl, who possessed a fortune yet did not care to claim it. He suddenly began to see her with different eyes. She no longer made such a bad impression upon him. In comparison with himself, sole heir, he did not rate Bärmann's chances with her very

high. He drew himself up, and played with his heavy gold chain.

"Why didn't you tell me this at once, cousin?" he said smiling and displaying his large teeth. "I should have—"

"You would not have accused me of stealing!" Emilchen broke in, understanding his smile, and feeling still more deeply insulted.

"That was a mistake," returned James, "but you yourself are to blame. We practical Americans don't understand such affairs. In fact, I still fail to comprehend—but that's no concern of mine. The paper is all right, and it's a matter of simple figuring to determine how much less value the house has now. Anyway," he continued, shoving up his vest and sticking his thumb in his leather belt, "anyway you need have no pity on me. I don't care a snap for the sneaking little sum of money he made over to you. In fact, I don't need his fortune at all. If I came over to fetch it, it was only to get a

last whack at the old man in his grave for having closed his heart and his purse to me while alive."

Emilchen raised her eyes to the sky. She wanted to avenge the insult of the dead man with a word, but her trembling lips were powerless to utter it. Bärmann came to the rescue.

"Miss Katz," he said, "thank the gentleman. Now you can enter upon your inheritance with perfect serenity of mind. You were Mr. Marcus's daughter, and this man in inheriting his property has cut you off from what is yours by right."

James seized his hat. He was possessed by a feeling akin to embarrassment.

"My representative will smooth out everything," he said. "I am going, and in case I don't see you again, I wish you good-by, Miss Katz."

He put out his hand to her, but Emilchen did not take it.

Bärmann accompanied James to the stair-

case. When they left the room, Emilchen broke down. The excitement, the anxiety, the joy were too much for her. Hot tears rolled down her cheeks. Then she raised her eyes as if to ask Heaven whether it all hadn't been a dream, whether those words of Bärmann—but lo! There he was himself! He looked at her, she looked at him with her large moist eyes. The reproach he was about to utter because of her mysterious silence died upon his lips. He was ashamed of the confession his towering rage had wrung from him. He waited for a word from her, but she could find none. At last, she said: "You are angry with me?"

"O no, not that," stammered Bärmann, "but tell me, why didn't you let me know about the legacy?"

"Because—I don't know—Bärmann—"

"O you know very well. It's not for nothing you let me doubt the magnanimity of your guardian! But you have no confidence in me, either!"

"Then in whom have I confidence?" she cried in a tone that issued from the innermost depths of her heart.

"Tell me, then," and he seized her hand, which still trembled lightly, "didn't you know what that paper of your uncle contained?"

"Yes, I did," she said, dropping her eyes.

"Did he tell you not to speak about it?"

"O no, —"

"Then, tell me, why, my dear Miss Emilchen, why did you keep quiet about it, and conceal it from everybody?"

Emilchen bent down, and picked up the dried lilac. While pulling it to pieces she said:

"Because I made a silent vow, dear Bär-mann, that no one should know I had money. I didn't want anyone to come again and offer to marry me for the sake of my thirty thousand gulden."

She threw away the denuded stalk, and looked shamefacedly to the floor. Bär-mann

felt his heart contract. An invisible wall seemed to be rising between him and this girl he had loved so long.

"You are right," he said in a forced voice. "After the experience you went through, you are justified in judging everybody else by that one man."

"Bärmann!" cried Emilie, extending her hand to him.

But he did not take it. He drew back a few steps, and cried out with pained vehemence:

"O, why did I bring him up here, why did I wrench your secret from you? If you had remained the poor, disinherited girl I thought you, then the dream of my life, the hope of my good old mother, would have been fulfilled! Then I should quietly have given him his inheritance, and with the modest portion that remained to me, I should have continued to work honestly and peacefully. In the end lopsided Bärmann with his red eyes would have plucked up courage

enough to tell you: 'Do you want to share my lot with me, Emilchen?' And you would not have thought that he who sues for your heart is only bent upon your money."

"Bärmann!" exclaimed Emilchen, with a cry from her heart. "How can you think that of me?"

"Must I not," he replied, "seeing you kept it a secret from me, too?"

Emilchen looked at him reproachfully and at the same time lovingly.

"Can't you really understand," she said, "why I wanted to conceal it from you, from you more than from anybody else? Well, then, I'll have to tell you," she continued, leaning her head on his shoulder. "It was because I knew your thoughts long ago. It was because you, good, modest man that you are, would never have told the rich heiress what, if I had remained the poor, ugly Schlemihlchen—"

She could not conclude her sentence, for his lips suddenly sealed her mouth. Two

beings of scant beauty held each other in embrace, two souls of rare beauty blended into one.

Thus they stood clasped in each other's arms for a long time without speaking.

Meanwhile Mrs. Jochebedchen stole up from the kitchen to hear whether any accident had befallen in the transaction she so greatly feared. She listened at the door, then she wiped her hand on the corner of her apron, and softly turned the brass door-knob. The scene that met her gaze brought tears to her eyes and smiles to her face.

"Mazel and Broche!" she called half aloud.

"Mother!" cried Bärmann.

"Mother!" cried Emilchen. And they embraced the little old woman.

"Weil, at last, at last! So you've ventured at last to tell her you love her, and 'all such like things more,' as he, peace be with him, would have said."

At this reminiscence, the happy couple

looked heavenward and smiled. It seemed to them they saw Uncle Marcus with the smile on his wide mouth giving them his blessing—and “all such like things more.”

The transactions with James's representative were quickly settled. Bärmann bought the business, and married the girl of his choice. Jochebedchen and Jeanette, who was now called Madam Rothschild, led Emilchen to the altar. Madam Rothschild had brought with her a whole silver service as a wedding gift, and half a wagon-load of Melsungen butter cakes for the wedding. The “educated” horse-dealer, her husband, wanted to make the couple a present of a magnificent horse for the “spinning wheel,” but Bärmann declined it.

Through Bärmann's industry the business flourished; and soon the title of Lottery Assessor was conferred upon the worthy successor of Mr. Marcus, and Schlemihlchen was now called Frau Assessorin. When old

Mewes died, they sold the "spinning wheel"; for the modest young couple preferred to walk on foot to the Park, where their little son gathered chestnuts in the Monkey Walk. He was named Marcus after their benefactor, their never-to-be-forgotten uncle, and by virtue, no doubt, of the old aphorism that two negatives make a positive, he grew into a handsome fellow with fair curly hair.

In the course of time Jochebedchen passed away. Despite her son's higher station in life she had never left the kitchen.

The Frau Assessorin survived her faithful husband. She transferred the business to strange hands, because her son displayed a decided preference for classical studies. Marcus Bärmann, or Max, as he called himself when a student, became a fine scholar, and was the first Jew to be appointed professor at a German university. His mother did not live to see this honor conferred upon him. She died only a few weeks before the

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event which filled the entire community with pride.

Had old Levy still been living, his comment would have been :

“Schlemihlchen was Schlemihlchen to the very end.”

RAV'S MINE

RAV'S MINE

In May, when the orange and lemon trees of the orangery in the Park are set out in pots on the open terrace, and cover the ground or the soil in the green wooden tubs with their white blossoms and with miniature balls of green fruit shaken off by the wind before their time, hundreds of children come to gather the petals and the fruit and carry them off tied up in knots made in their handkerchiefs. At one period, a slim, somewhat stooping woman, with three children, ranging from four to eight years of age, might have been seen, almost every day, strolling through the gate of the Park along the "Mergelbahn"—a group as charming as though it had stepped out of Richter's illustrations to the *Kinderlieder*.

The woman is clad in a gray dress, an old-fashioned white shawl strewn with

palms, and a narrow little black straw hat, the fashion of an early day, which brings the long nose on the pale face into greater relief. Two thin gray love-locks curl from under the hat. The children with their dark curly heads and dark eyes look like the little angels at the feet of the Sistine Madonna.

All three want to hold on to the lady's hand, and they tease each other amiably for the privilege. The right hand, in the black filet glove, belongs solely to the youngest, a little maiden; the left hand has to be shared by the other two. But if all three leave their place for one second, lured away by a belated violet at the grassy edge of the walk, or by a chestnut blossom hanging low over their heads, the contest begins anew, with a laughing and tumbling and a plucking and scrambling for the loved leader's dress and shawl. Peace and order are finally restored by a smile and mock annoyance, a scolding and stolen kisses. The oldest of the three then yields in the consciousness of

his dignity. He knows full well he is the apple of somebody's eye.

Thus they amble along as far as the orangery, where, given their freedom, the children rush off to the blossom-hunt. The one who finds a particularly big flower brings it in triumph to their companion, who is resting on a bench set in the stone balustrade next to marble amourettes bereft of their noses, and is gazing into space across the "Bowling Green," a large lawn edged with marble statues. She seems to be dreaming. The thin lips of the toothless mouth move mutely, and the gray eyes send a friendly greeting to invisible figures.

All of a sudden a cry of the children awakes her, and she turns toward reality with a glance full of mother love. The children, having hunted blossoms to their hearts' content, shake their trophies into her lap, and she immediately binds them into the corners of their handkerchiefs. Then they whisk onto the bench, and press and

squeeze up as close to her as possible, and caress her, slinging their short little arms about hers.

“Tell us a story! A fairy tale!”

“A poem!” cries the oldest. “A poem about the ‘Good Man,’ about Hannchen who was her mother’s joy and the pride of the whole village!”

“No, no, a song!” clamors the little maiden. “A song! ‘In Myrtill’s Ruined Hut,’” and she begins to chirp the melody like a little canary bird.

The leader joins in, and is followed by the other two.

The passers-by smile. The captain of the guards, whose horse waits at the Bowling Green, sneers ironically at the “old Jewess.” The swimming master, who passes through the orangery with his pupils on the way to the swimming-school, laughs graciously toward the group.

Who is the woman with the children? A governess? Those glances, those kisses have

never been paid for! A mother? She's too old. A grandmother? She's too virginal looking. Then who is she?

She is none other than Rav's Mine.

This was the only name by which she was known in the Jewish community. Forty years' use had sanctified it. Her name was really Minkel, which translated into High German is Mina, into the popular speech of our city, Mine. She was the daughter of the old Rav, and was known to three generations as Rav's Mine. Her story is the old simple story of an "unmated heart."

They always called him "the old Rav," as if he had never been young. His beard was long and white, and he wore a cocked hat. He never left his house, except to officiate at funerals, for wedding ceremonies were performed in "Benary's Shul," which was situated in his own court-yard, opposite to his house. The old synagogue had been closed because of its dilapidated condition, and in its place a number of meeting rooms

had been furnished to permit the various parties in the community to hold services, each according to its shading of the ritual.

The most orthodox gathered in "Benary's Shul," so named for its founder. In this room, blackened by the lamp-smoke of many years' making, the prayers were recited in the ancient language, mumbled and shrieked in that fugued recitative which has made an epithet of "Judenshul." Here the Shammes ruled undismayed. He was the brother-in-law of the old Rav. Ezekiel Flesh was an adept in loud groaning over his prayers and in swaying his upper body to and fro like a metronome, in order to praise the Lord "with all his bones." At the confession of sins he beat his old withered breast so mightily with his fists that his chest resounded like an alarm bell.

In this conventicle the old Rav every Sabbath delivered a short Droshe in Hebrew, acutely expounding some Bible verse or Talmudic precept. At home he "paskened" to

doubt-tortured housewives as to whether a fowl was clean or unclean, whether a pot could be retained in use, or had to be discarded. His official activity was limited to these functions. The questions of belief and reform that were slowly disintegrating the community troubled the old scholar little. He wanted to preserve the peace by letting everybody do as he wanted to do.

His brother-in-law Ezekiel Flesh was of a more restless temperament. He had to employ his fingers by constantly twisting and kneading a pellet of wax, and his mind by spying upon all transgressors of the Law. When he came skulking in stealthily with a fresh denunciation to make, the old Rav would shove his black cap in annoyance to one side of his bare skull, and cry:

"Keep quiet, Ezekiel, I don't want to know about it."

"Why not?"—Ezekiel's stereotyped rejoinder. "You will let things go so far that the whole community will become treife."

And growling and grumbling, the persecutor would take leave of the peace-loving old man.

But there was another demon to disturb the Rav's serenity. It kept up a constant wrangling in the interior of his own house. The Socrates had his Xantippe. Though the Rebbetzin bore the amiable name of Süß, her nature was as sour as the expression of her face. She was covetous, miserly, quarrelsome, and malicious. Her gray vulture's eyes detected every transgression in the congregation, her yellow vulture's claws tore every victim to shreds, and like a vulture she pounced upon the poor old Rav when he drew in nourishment for his spirit from the old folios and commentaries on the Bible, the study of which was his one recreation.

Every evening pupils of the Jewish teachers' seminary gathered about the learned master, for he could expound the dark passages of the Bible with ingenuity and wit,

and unravel the intricate problems of the Talmud with hair-splitting dialectics displayed in questions and counter-questions. A clever remark by one of his pupils was rewarded with a pinch of the cheek.

But when the young people were listening most thoughtfully to the words of the scholar, their intelligent eyes fixed upon him, their mouths agape, Mrs. Süß would come stumping and clattering into the room, and all the good spirits of the Talmud would go flying from the room, as if driven up a Jacob's-ladder by an evil demon.

"Süssleb, what is it?" asked the rabbi.

She poured out her heart like the contents of a bucket, and bickering and nagging shoved their supper at the students, after having taken the precaution to spread the bread with rancid goose-fat. She scolded at the dear times; at the close-fisted congregation, which from a sheer desire to follow the new fashions had nothing left for the Rebbetzin; at the insulting remarks passed

upon her, and at much else. She went on and on unwearied, until a clear voice from without cried:

“Mother, mother!”

Then she withdrew like a passing storm that rumbles farther and farther in the distance. And gradually the blue sky smiled serenely again upon the old Rav and his pupils, and the angels of the Talmud cautiously descended the ladder.

The clear voice belonged to his daughter Mine, a lovely flower beside her thistly mother. She must have passed her twenty-fifth year, though she looked no older than twenty. A small head crowned the slender, refined figure. Two long, black love-locks contrasted with the mother-of-pearl tint of her face. The gray eyes had not inherited the mother's stinging look. They were veiled by a soft melancholy, a mild resignation. The thin lips preferably remained closed, because the teeth had suffered from much sickness. For this reason, when she

spoke, Mine tried to hide them, and would have been considered affected by anyone who did not know her well. Her uncle Ezekiel Flesh could not bear her manner of speech.

"Don't make snouts, Minkel," he said. "Do me the favor, and don't speak High German."

"Shall I speak Yiddish?"

"Why not?" growled Ezekiel, and rolled his wax pellet agitatedly between his fingers.

Mine had other accomplishments beside the ability to speak High German. She sang to the accompaniment of the guitar, which she carried by a blue ribbon slung over her shoulder. Her repertoire was: "I send Thee to Alexis," "In Myrtill's Ruined Hut," and, if in particularly good voice, Tancred's "After So Many Sufferings." The sound of the music reached the old Rav's pupils, who were not afraid of these tones; they did not chase the angels of the Talmud from the room. At worst, the

young men were a bit distracted from their studies by listening to them.

When Mine entered the room, the lights seemed to burn brighter. She had a good word for everyone. Outside in the vestibule hung the students' coats, into which she secretly stuck nuts and apples, on Purim even a Boles, which she had nipped off the dough of the butter-cakes behind her mother's back.

The old Rav liked to hear her sing. Sometimes when his divine patience was stretched to its utmost limit by a concert of Xantippe's, he would say to Mine, pinching her cheek with the back of his index and middle fingers:

"Minkel, sing 'After So Many Sufferings' for me."

One of the students was called "handsome Henoch." He was an orphan who had come from the province to the capital to "learn," and he took his noon meals turn and turn about with the benevolent fami-

lies of the community. He was conspicuous for his fine slender figure, the glow of his dark eyes, and his mass of blue-black curls. Pearly teeth gleamed from ~~between~~ beautifully curved lips. The down of a youth of seventeen shaded his upper lip, and laid a bluish bloom on his cheeks, like the purple powder of a fresh plum. When, inspired by a theme propounded by the rabbi, he would begin to speak, and with increasing enthusiasm would lift his arms and raise his dark rapt eyes, he resembled the boy Jesus preaching in the Temple, as he is portrayed by the Italian master on the picture hanging in our public gallery.

Henoch was the favorite of the old Rav. Even Mrs. Süß found less to scold at in him than in the others.

"Go 'way with you, you little wheedler," she would say to him, giving him a rap on the shoulder, when he had coaxed "my dear Mrs. Rebbetzin" into granting something he wanted.

But he was most favored by Miss Mine. He fetched her notes and guitar strings, exchanged novels for her at the circulating library—which he skimmed through at night before delivering them to her—and was even permitted to call for her at the theatre, to which she had a subscription ticket, entitling her to a place in a second-class box seating seven others. As he escorted her home across the large square, she told him about the piece, and shed additional tears over Romeo's misfortune and Jaromir's great monologue. And if the play had been very, very fine, Mine at its next presentation would in some secret way manage to put Henoch in possession of four groschen, so that he could enjoy it at first hand in the pit.

This was not the full extent of her benefactions. It was her custom to collect the cast-off clothing of the sons of the well-to-do, and distribute it as fairly as possible among her father's students. As it chanced,

the finest suits always fitted handsome Henoch.

One mild winter evening he called for Mine at the theatre. The stars gleamed with rare effulgence in the dark blue of the nocturnal heavens. The large square seemed to be roofed with a gold-embroidered canopy. In the middle of the square Mine remained standing at the statue of the Landgrave—Henoch must teach her the constellations.

“How much you know, Henoch!” she said.

Henoch sighed.

“Ah, Miss Mine, if you were only aware how troubled I am because I know nothing. Of what use is it that I study whole nights through, if I study the text books of the gymnasium without system or guidance? My heart is parched with thirst for knowledge, and the source of refreshment will be eternally denied the poor man. Only the sons of the rich can attend the higher

schools, and be led by enlightened men through the mazes of doubt to the road to truth. A world of wisdom and knowledge is open to them, while we poor people must look on from afar, like Moses outside the Promised Land."

"But you want to be a rabbi, don't you?" responded Mine, struck by the violence of his regrets. "And you are learning that with us!"

They had begun to walk again, and now Henoah stood still.

"God forbid," he said, "that I should fail to recognize what I owe to your good and learned father! He's a great Biblical scholar, standing almost alone in our times. But do our times need this cult of the dead letter? We have travelled with giant strides over the Talmud ant-hills in which, up to this time, our thoughts have been condemned to burrow. A new, holy spirit is flaming up in those congregations which are freeing the exalted thought of Judaism from its century-

worn forms. Preachers of the purest faith in God, equipped with a knowledge of general history, abreast of all advances in human thought, deliver sermons in German, in a language intelligible to all, upon the purified doctrines of our belief, the fountain-head of all Divine knowledge! In Hamburg, in Berlin, in Breslau — ”

“For God’s sake!” Mine interrupted him, letting go of his arm in terror. “Those are the reformed Temples. The believing Jews have put the ban upon them! Henoah, what are you thinking of?”

Henoah smiled.

“They are the boldest,” he said. “Perhaps they have ventured too far. But look at Frankfort!” he continued, grasping her arm. “There, in that orthodox community, a man is minister who unites Talmudic culture with general knowledge, and every party in the community honors and admires him. Perhaps you don’t know, Miss Mine, that there is a Yeshive as well as a Univer-

sity at Würzburg, and that those who study there enjoy the privilege of developing their intellects on all sides. O how I've longed to be there! Then, too, they are building castles in the air—they want to erect a new and glorious Temple in that beloved city, so that the scattered members of the community can group themselves about the preacher of the pure word of God. But I am wearying you with my fancies. Does it avail the worm in the dust to envy the bird in the air?"

He became silent. Mine was profoundly stirred. She had forgotten all about the play. Henoch's fancies occupied her mind to the exclusion of everything else. But what could she do to lend wings to the ambitious striver? At the door of the house she pressed his hand warmly.

"You won't tell a soul, will you, of my foolish desires?"

"They are not foolish, and I thank you for having confided them to me."

The whole night Mine had to think of those foolish desires. The picture of the handsome youth, who so ardently stretched his arms toward his ideal, followed her even in her dreams. She saw him as rabbi of the congregation preaching in a new fantastically decorated Temple, and a woman's face greeted him proudly and happily from the first row in the women's gallery. She awoke from her dream with a start. But the thought in her heart would not rest.

"Is it possible," she asked herself, "that a man with such ideas in a Jewish community like ours could—"

A few days later her uncle Ezekiel Flesh came into the kitchen from the Rav's room, where he had delivered himself of a fresh denunciation. Mrs. Süss was clattering about in the kitchen, and she threw a disapproving look at him when Mine offered him a *Schnäppschen*.

"Why not?" he said by way of acceptance.

"Uncle," said Mine, after a few remarks on indifferent matters, "is it true that they have such a wonderful Rav in Frankfort?"

The old man set the glass on the table with a bang, and began to knead his pellet furiously.

"Wonderful?" he cried. "Wonderful that such an old Kille as Frankfort should listen to the new-fashioned Shmues. Some tramp who darshens in High German! A shame and a disgrace on a Jewish Kille! Just let them keep him, why not? But I'll tell you this—may your fâther live another hundred years—so long as I'm Shammes, no High German will come into my congregation. There are some, I know, who want a new-fashioned fellow. Our rich bug Joel Reinach would be enough of a sinner in Israel to introduce one! And the Lord, blessed be He, has punished him for it, too—has taken four of his seven from him. Why not?"

At these words, for the special edification

of the Lord, he vehemently twisted his pellet to a thread, and stumped out of the door without saying "Good-by."

Mine heard in horror that the misfortune of that excellent man, Joel Reinach, was considered a visitation from God for his enlightened convictions.

"These are the pious," she exclaimed with a shudder.

Now she fully understood the painful longing of her young friend. But the fanatical denunciations of her uncle had left her with a ray of light in her soul. Joel Reinach, the richest and most esteemed man in the community, shared Henoeh's views, as she had just heard. Possibly he could—but foolish thought! He was inaccessible for her, as for everybody!

Joel Reinach was the head of the firm Reinach Brothers, which kept a silk shop in a large stone structure in Enten Street. His brothers and nephews carried on the business, because sickness and misfortune had

weakened him, and for years he had not left his room. A peculiar air of melancholy solemnity pervaded even the shop. The silk goods lay in closed mahogany cases, and the show-window displayed nothing beside the name of the firm in gold letters on the huge glass pane. Inside, the sons of the house and their partners gave the buyer the ceremonious reception of a guest in the antechamber of a prince. No loud words were exchanged; the prices were as sacred as religious dogmas, and the intercourse between buyer and seller was as civil as at a charity bazar where nobility stands behind the counter. But the excellence of their wares and the just prices put upon them had raised Reinach Brothers to one of the largest and most aristocratic firms of the capital.

Joel Reinach had no sons, but seven lovely daughters, who were soon left motherless. A gruesome fate seemed to grudge the world the possession of such rare blossoms of maidenhood. When they reached

their eighteenth year, the roses on their cheeks paled, their full round figures withered away, the canker in the bud gnawed silently but steadily, until the flower dropped away petal by petal. Four of the seven had already met their untimely death, mourned by all who had known them or had merely admired their ideal beauty from afar. The remaining three had not yet reached the fateful age.

The father was torn by grief as cruel as Job's. But he bore it heroically. With each new blow the outcry of his soul grew fainter, until it subsided into mute resignation to the will of God. Bound to his martyr's cross he awaited the fresh arrows of the angel of death, his tearless glance searching the Inscrutable, without reproaches, without complaints. Scarcely sixty years old, he looked like a broken-down octogenarian. His tall figure bent, his waxen face framed in thin white hair, the half-extinguished eyes covered by a green shade, he

sat in his room hung with green, almost inaccessible to the outer world, and span the thread of his thoughts about him like a chrysalis.

Nevertheless, within this hermetically sealed abode pulsed a wonderfully beautiful life. Every evening the girls took turns in reading to their father, or they played the piano and the organ in the adjoining room, or sang songs and several-part airs in their clear seraph voices. None of the creations of art or the triumphs of science remained unknown to him. He sought information on all the larger aspects as well as the details of social conditions. Despite his secluded life, he was acquainted with the whole community, and all-knowing and all-bounteous, he invisibly poured benefactions from his rich lap upon all the needy and distressed.

This was the man upon whom Ezekiel Flesh called down the punishment of God, because in his judgment Joel Reinach would

be the first to agitate bringing an enlightened minister to the community.

Mine looked up to this one possible helper of her protégé as to the Holy of Holies, to be honored from afar but never entered. She had never seen Joel Reinach, and she pictured him to herself with apprehensive timidity.

But before long she was to see and come to know him. The occasion was brought about by one of the frequent quarrels between Mrs. Süß and the servant. The girl had not swept the stairs to her satisfaction, and Mrs. Süß gave vent to her spleen by wresting the broom from her hands and manipulating it herself. In doing so she stumbled over the handle, and fell down the stone steps of the winding staircase. She screamed. Everybody in the house came running to the rescue. Mine rushed to the scene with her guitar hanging to her shoulder. The old Rav even deserted his folios.

"Süssleb," he cried, with serio-comic *double entendre*, "don't break in two."

But the expected retort, "You need two of me," did not come, for the silence of death had laid itself upon her lips.

Mine fainted with her guitar still bound to her by the blue ribbon.

Respect for their old rabbi brought the whole community to the funeral. Ezekiel Flesh lamented his sister in torn clothes, though he had never been able to abide her. The patient old Rav quietly and sincerely mourned his teasing companion, become as necessary to him as the habit of a lifetime.

Though she had a nervous headache, and wore a cloth over her forehead, he let Mine receive the numerous callers—all except one!

The day after the interment Joel Reinach had himself carried to the rabbi in a sedan-chair to offer condolences to the worthy teacher of the community. This was an event in the city. Mine trembled when Joel

Reinach expressed the desire to see her. She hastily slipped the bandage from her head when he entered the room where she was "sitting Shive" on a low stool. But when he stepped up to her and laid his pale, spare hand on her head, the ache left her as if banished by some magnetic force, and a thought flashed through her breast warming the very depths of her heart. All timidity passed away, when she looked at his mild, benevolent face. The fatherly tone awoke endless confidence in her. When he left, she involuntarily drew his hand to her lips, and a resolve fixed itself firmly in her soul.

She smiled almost joyously when Henoch came in. Like a son of the family, he was constantly at the side of the mourners.

"After all, Henoch," she said, "there is no misfortune which does not hold within itself the germ of some good fortune."

Henoch did not understand her mysterious words. Nevertheless he pressed his friend's hands warmly.

A week later Mine, clad in deep mourning, went to the house in Enten Street. Mr. Reinach's daughters received her amiably. The three rosy children contrasted markedly with the woman beyond her first youth, whose face was all the more sunken and emaciated from the emotions of the past few days.

They asked her sympathetically what she wanted.

"I should like to speak to Mr. Reinach himself," she answered in embarrassment, twisting a little parcel wrapped in tissue paper.

The daughters were silent. After a short pause Bertha, the youngest and prettiest, scarcely fifteen years old, gave her a friendly nod, and slipped into the adjoining room. A moment later she returned, her eyes beaming with pleasure.

"Father asks you to step in."

Mine's heart beat rapidly as she passed through the wadded folding-doors into the

twilight of the chamber. The bent old man in a close-fitting gray coat rose from his easy-chair, before which a book lay open on a reading-desk, and with a wave toward a chair asked her to be seated.

"What blessings do you bring me, Miss Mine? How can I be of service to you?" he asked in whispered tones.

"I beg your pardon," she answered, somewhat shyly, "for taking refuge with you. Among my mother's things, I found some old Brabant lace, and I would like to ask you whether you couldn't—whether you couldn't turn it into money for me?"

She was about to unwrap the parcel, but was stopped by the old man's thin hand laid upon hers.

"I'm very grateful to you," he said, stroking her hand, "and though lace is not one of the wares our firm deals in, I should like—" he noticed that Mine's lips were quivering painfully, and went on more rapidly—"I should like to ask you whether you

or your revered father are in embarrassment—”

Mine reddened.

“Not that,” she stammered, “Thank God, it’s not for us—that I wanted to—”

“To do some charity?” Mr. Reinach helped her out, again taking her hand in his.

“That’s it!” she cried. “I wanted—” She came to a stop.

“Have you no confidence in me?” Mr. Reinach asked, smiling.

“Yes, yes!” she cried, and tears glistened in her eyes, which looked fully and frankly into his. “Among our students there’s one, hand— young Henoch, an especially industrious and gifted pupil of my father. His whole heart is bound up in the desire to study in Würzburg. He says he can become very learned there. He told me his ideas— glorious plans for one day uniting our community in a new, enlightened, and uplifting service.” Reinach’s hand trembled in hers. “But he is poor. He must eat his meals

turn and turn about at various tables, and I thought,—that perhaps,—by selling this lace— ”

She stopped and looked at the parcel awkwardly. Reinach had removed the green shade from his eyes, and regarded her with a loving look.

“ You are quite right, my child,” he said at last, stroking her hand softly. “ The old Brabant lace is worth a good deal! You need not take the trouble to open the parcel. I don't have to see the lace to know its value. I am not estimating it too highly if for the present I give you three hundred reichsthaler yearly for your protégé.”

“ God bless you! ” cried Mine, and wanted to draw his hand to her lips. But the lively gesture, the glad outcry, seemed to give the old man actual physical pain.

“ You have nothing to thank me for,” he said, gently repellant. “ You alone can finally determine the price of your lace, and when your protégé once has reached his

goal, and becomes a pious and enlightened teacher in Israel —”

“Then the whole community will bless you!” cried Mine, tears starting to her eyes.

Joel Reinach leaned back in his chair as if exhausted, and with a gentle wave of the hand bade Mine leave him.

Bertha was waiting in the next room. Mine, overpowered by her feelings, embraced her and kissed her on her marble brow.

“Your father is an angel!” she exclaimed. “May God preserve you for him!”

Anyone seeing her speed through the streets would have supposed some calamity had occurred. Nobody, not even handsome Henoch, suspected the good fortune that lent wings to her feet.

When she told him her good news, he raised his great glowing eyes, moist with tears, to Heaven, then looked at the girl intoxicated with joy, and every consideration

of respectful reserve dropped from him. He covered her hands with hot kisses, and when she withdrew them, he laid his curly head on her breast, and stammered disconnected words of thanks.

“ You are my good angel, my dear, dear benefactress, whom I shall always—always —”

It was the most blessed moment Mine had ever lived through. She was to experience only one other like it.

With beating heart Henoch informed the old master of his plan. First the old Rav shook his head, then he nodded with a melancholy smile. The one gesture was for the past, the other for the future.

Later, when Ezekiel began to curse the renegade, Mine's father said:

“ Never mind, he's right. *Ha-Kol be-Ito*, which means ‘ Everything has its season,’ but also it means ‘ Every dog has his day.’ ”

Henoch wanted to thank Mr. Reinach in

person, but the old man denied himself on the plea of not feeling well. He had already given an order for the payment of the sum at his office.

Until the autumn Henoch worked day and night to complete his knowledge of the classical languages, and he passed the matriculation examinations brilliantly.

The hour for leaving came. At her father's bidding Mine made an Arba-Kanfes, and the old Rav hid a gold ducat in each of the four corner pockets. She did not show the Rav the pocket-book on which "Souvenir" was embroidered in gold beads.

The two of them accompanied Henoch to the post-chaise. The postillion blew his horn, off rattled the stage over the Königsplatz, and Henoch waved his handkerchief from the window.

"Yevorechecho—God bless thee!" the old man cried after him in a loud voice.

Mine said the same, though not with her lips, only with her heart.

With Henoch all glory departed from the house of the Rav. The students came and went as before. Mine spread their bread with fresh butter instead of rancid goose-fat, filled their coat pockets with nuts, and collected linen and clothes for them. But it was not the same. Now the cook called for her at the theatre, and the sight of the Great Bear made her sigh, and Orion drew tears from her eyes. When she sang, "I send Thee to Alexis," she substituted another name for Alexis, and sent the rosy messenger to Würzburg.

Thus over a year passed by. The angel of death knocked anew at the portals of Joel Reinach's house. Then he came to the quiet room of the old Rav.

One morning when Mine carried the coffee to her father's bedside, the old man lay there as though asleep, a gentle smile on his lips, his hands folded over his old Siddurl. Unperceived, sleep had delivered him into the arms of his brother death.

He was buried next to Mrs. Süß. For the first time the two rested together in peace.

When the news reached Henoch, he wanted to hurry to his friend and show the last honors to his beloved master. But Mine begged him not to interrupt his studies.

"I know," she wrote, "that you are with us in spirit during this painful time. We do not want to see each other in tears."

Was it delicacy or was it vanity that dictated these words? Poor, dear Mine, you would not confess it to yourself.

It must be said for the honor of the community that the occasion brought out their gratitude for their old minister. Everybody, young and old, followed his bier, a seven-days' mourning service was instituted in all the houses of prayer, and his daughter was given a pension of four hundred reichsthaler, "to secure her comfort until her marriage, or, if she should remain unmarried, until her death."

It was her uncle Ezekiel who, gentle and considerate as usual, acquainted her with the decision.

"I hope, Minkelleb," he said, "you won't be a burden on the Kille for long. Because nobody who wants to be Rav after your father, peace be with him, will get my vote, unless he includes you in the bargain. Why not?"

These amiable words of her sole relative were a knife-thrust through Mine's heart. She kept silence, for it was impossible to make herself understood by this man.

She thanked the community in writing, and quietly went to work to reduce her scale of living in proportion to her limited income. The next day she received a carefully sealed parcel. Inside she found her lace laid on a slip of paper curiously printed. She had never seen a piece of paper like it before. A note in delicate handwriting was attached:

"Permit me, my dear Miss Mine, to re-

turn your deposit to you with thanks. I hope the lace will some day trim your bridal gown.

Joel Reinach."

The curiously printed slip was an Austrian bond for five thousand gulden.

Her bridal gown! The rich present slipped from her mind. She repeated the words, and tears ran down her thin old maid's cheeks. Was it the yearning that fills every unmarried woman's heart, especially in advancing years; the yearning to love and to be loved; the yearning to unite a solitary, orphaned soul with another related soul; the yearning not to fall to the ground like a loose link in the endless chain of humanity; the yearning for the joys and the pangs of motherhood, the bliss of pressing a child to her heart with a mother's happiness and a mother's solicitude? Did her mind for a moment recur to her uncle's practical plan, or was it a glow of ideality that turned her toward him who was re-

moved from her not only by space but also by youth and beauty? Her bridal gown! Why did hot tears course down her cheeks? Were they tears of hope, or tears of resignation?

The painful events that had shattered her sensitive nerves made her look even older than her thirty years. She still preserved her slender figure and her aristocratic carriage, her dark hair still curled in long locks over the thin cheeks; but an almost imperceptible hoar-frost lay on her brow and temples.

Nevertheless it seemed that Ezekiel Flesh's prophecy would come true. It had probably been bruited about that the hand of Rav's Mine had to be won by the candidate for the rabbinate. Possibly, too, her relation with the jealous Shammes was a contributory fact, or the quiet protection of Joel Reinach, of which everybody knew. It might also have entered into the candidate's calculations that the community, in order to

save itself the paying of an annuity to the orphan, must prefer the suitor to her hand. However that might be, all the unmarried rabbis who applied for the position—married men were summarily rejected by Ezekiel Flesh—did not delay to call upon Rav's Mine, to ask her protection and put themselves at her disposal with more or less veiled insinuations. Whoever did not of himself remain away after the first visit, received no uncertain repulse at his second attempt.

In vain Mine's women friends endeavored to give her "good advice," in vain her uncle cast at her his furious "Why not?" Mine forbade further visits.

"I would rather give up the annuity," she sobbed to her uncle.

Joel Reinach and the younger directors of the community were just as insistent in protesting against the machinations of the fanatical Shammes. Finally it was decided to leave the position unoccupied for the

present. As occasion demanded, a rabbi was summoned from the neighboring town.

After this Mine was left undisturbed. She dedicated her time to the Sisterhood, a society for educating poor Jewish girls. Besides spending several hours every day in the Sisterhood house, she received the most intelligent pupils in her own home, and taught them languages, singing, and art-embroidery. With her help they made all sorts of articles, on which bead flowers and birds and fruits of wool flaunted their gay colors. At Purim these articles were raffled, and the proceeds devoted to the purposes of the Sisterhood. The poor children worshipped Mine.

And so her life passed, like a mild, monotonous gray day, illumined by only one ray of sunlight. When the postman called out "from Würzburg," her pale cheeks turned roseate, and she tore the envelope open with trembling fingers.

The last letter had wound up with :

“ You warn me, my only friend, in view of my future and the aims I am pursuing, not to estrange myself from the belief of our fathers by following false paths in the garden of modern philosophy. Ah, believe me, dearest friend, I really had no faith until I made these studies. We underestimate what is our own if we do not learn what belongs to others. We fancy that that which is closed against us hides the key to the riddle of the universe. But the deeper we penetrate, the farther the goal recedes before us. The boldest advances of modern philosophy, the acutest hypotheses of science, ultimately lead to one point—where knowledge ends and belief begins. The human spirit, because it has its human limitations, cannot conceive the infinite, only what is limited. Man ever and again removes the golden kernel of the Divine from its worn-out shell. As often, however, as the kernel is delivered over to humanity as its common possession, the shell forms around it once more, and

grows thicker and thicker—religions turn into churches. All you need is to pierce these various shells with the help of thorough studies, in order finally to discover the same golden kernel, which, like the Holy of Holies in the Second Temple, is the Invisible, the Inconceivable, before which the human spirit must bow in faith, whether He created the first pro-creating cell, or the kingdoms of nature and the systems of the universe, and established the eternal laws that govern them. Why should I disown that shell which by its very rustiness seems more sacred than the other shells? He who arrives at belief by way of knowledge not only becomes stronger in his belief, but also more tolerant than the narrow-minded man. He will not aim to destroy the form, only to put a soul into it. And I am absolutely certain that I can succeed in doing this in any congregation, even our own. I shall find progressive spirits there to understand me, and time and gentle consideration will grad-

ually bring the others, too, to a more enlightened understanding and to nobler forms.

"I held my first trial sermon in Hanau. It pleased the congregation, though to myself it seemed a bit obscure and sophomoric. On the road from my heart to my lips much escaped me. I do not yet understand how to collect all I have and hold it fast. But I have one whole year still for study and for putting into practice what I know. The latter will incidentally enable me to earn so much that I shall no longer need the assistance of my benefactor. First I want to be done with all work on myself—I want to be a finished product—then I hope you will see me a candidate for your congregation.

"In the meantime rejoice in the consciousness of having made one man happy."

Mine read the letter over and over again with tears of happiness. The longed-for meeting had been put off another year. But she wrote nothing to Henoah to persuade him to come. She regarded it as a

decree of Providence that the congregation must wait for the chosen one.

Since the death of the old Rav a great transformation was perceptible in the community. Reverence for the aged master had restrained the younger element. Now, in rare accord, they felt and expressed the desire to unite and rebuild the disintegrated service. Ezekiel Flesh, it is true, put the ban upon everybody who spoke of building a Temple.

Fate, however, dealt one of her ironic blows to the zealous fanatic. His only son was baptized, in order to marry the daughter of a Christian minister in Stadthagen. When he who had cursed every child that ran through the streets bareheaded, learned of the apostasy of his only son, the wax pellet dropped from his restless fingers for the first time in his life. He wanted to "sit Shive" for the lost one. Instead, he screamed out and sank to the floor next to his plank bed. Pain and wrath had broken

his heart. With a curse upon his son he died the death of the righteous.

Now the younger leaders of the community got together undisturbed. They wanted to build a suitable House of God, and send a call to some enlightened minister. They found a staunch supporter in Joel Reinach. All the rays of fine thought emanated from his little green room. The broken-down old man, who was now left only one of his seven daughters, beautiful Bertha, applied himself with youthful ardor to the building of the new Temple. He seemed a second Ezra. He subscribed the largest sums, and the others followed with smaller subscriptions, ready to offer any sacrifice. The architect was a son of the community named Rosengarten. Soon, upon a fine garden site on the outskirts of the city rose a mighty Romanesque structure, and within less than a year the gilded tablets of the law were gleaming on its frontal.

And at the same time a ray of light pene-

trated the dusk of Joel Reinach's home. A young physician, who had acquired renown in other parts, came to settle in the capital, and he heard of Reinach's tragic fate. He gave Bertha a thorough examination, and found her organs unimpaired. The hot-house existence the other daughters had led seemed to him the cause of their early death. He declared that if Bertha was to be kept alive, she must have light and air and exercise; she must swim, and ride horseback, and wander through the charming woods that encircle our city. All considerations of form, all old customs were set aside, and people looked in amazement at the girl, shot up into slender womanhood, galloping across fields and through woods. Clad in her dark riding-habit, seated on her milk-white steed, her chestnut curls streaming in the wind, a blue veil flying about her head like a cloud, she seemed a fairy stepped out of an old fable.

The synagogue was completed. Inside

the columned hall, over the entrance door, rose the choir with fine over-archings. The youths and boys of the community studied old choral melodies for the Psalms of David. The scrolls of the Torah and the gold and silver ornaments were brought from all the Houses of Prayer and placed in the ark, surrounded by small varicolored columns. The women of the community who were skilled with the needle embroidered curtains and altar cloths. Mine cut up her mother's brocaded bridal gown and made two coverings for Torah scrolls.

The only thing lacking was the preacher. Of the many candidates not one had proved suitable.

It was in spring, between Pesach and Shabuos, when the news spread that Doctor Henoeh would hold his trial sermon.

Mine had received the announcement from Henoeh himself, and she carried the information breathlessly to Joel Reinach. When she reached his door, she stood there

dazzled. She was met by the beautiful Amazon whose steed was pawing the ground before the entrance.

Mine told her news gleefully, but Bertha scarcely seemed to hear it.

"My father will be pleased to see you," she said with a charming smile, which revealed the gleam of her pearly teeth. Removing her long gauntlets, she pressed Mine's thin hand in her own, so white and plump. Mine looked at the dazzling vision with admiration slightly tinged with melancholy. Then she mounted the steps to Joel Reinach's room. It was unchanged, but the figure of the old man had grown even more bent. Mild joy illuminated his face at Mine's message.

"Your protégé is heartily welcome, my dear Miss Mine. God grant that his noble wishes and yours may be fulfilled. They are the same as mine."

One week only, and she would see him again! Day and night she quivered with the

thought. He alone occupied her mind, for him alone she prayed. She did not tell even herself the other hopes and desires that lay buried in the deepest chamber of her heart. She was scarcely aware of them.

It could hardly have been by mere chance, however, that she wore her black silk Sabbath dress every day of the week, and that she could not use any of the chemisettes she possessed, but had to have a new one made by Sprinzchen Sennet, the best dress-maker in the community. She even allowed herself to be persuaded for the first time since her parents' death to pin a colored velvet bow on.

He might come any day in the week. The first few days it was in vain that she never left the house, and counted the hours and minutes, jumping up from her embroidery frame with a beating heart if she heard a knock at the door. On the Wednesday of this week fell the New Moon, when it was her custom to go to the Sisterhood house and

say half-Hallel with the girls. This time she had two of her favorites come instead to her own house, lest she be away when Henoah arrive. She stood at the window with the girls, and prayed. A couple of hyacinths sent their perfume into the spring sunshine. Devotion filled her soul, and for a few moments drove away every other thought. She uttered aloud the words of the Psalms in Mendelssohn's beautiful translation, the children followed, moving their lips mutely :

“He maketh the barren woman to keep house, and to be a joyful mother of children.”

A soft voice behind her echoed,
“Hallelujah.”

Henoah had knocked on the door gently, and not receiving a response had opened it just as gently. He saw her standing there at prayer between the two children, with her back toward him. It was the tall, aristocratic figure he had known. The dark locks

fell to her shoulders just as long ago. Her voice vibrated nervously and rang with a tone that came from the heart. A sense of reverence overcame him, a feeling of intimacy and homelikeness. Tears of genuine emotion rose to his eyes. For a few moments he regarded the group in silence, and when they said "Hallelujah," the response escaped his breast involuntarily.

Mine turned, struck by the voice. The prayer-book fell from her hand.

"Henoch!" she stammered, almost inaudibly.

He stood before her, the beloved friend for whom she had longed so ardently, handsomer than ever, in the full glow of ripe manhood. The blue-black curls brushed back from his forehead left the high noble brow bare; a dark beard covered cheek and chin, and encircled the full lips.

What Henoch saw was a face emaciated and pale, trembling lips parted in surprise, aging features distorted the more by the

start of joy. His grateful fancy had idealized this face, and given it lasting youth.

As though he had put out his hand for a flower and pressed a caterpillar, Henoch drew back, the words dying on his lips.

Mine sensed the thing that made him tremble. A flash went through her heart—a flash that illumines, but also destroys.

“My dear friend!” said Henoch, his voice shaking, and stretched his hands toward her. His eyes filled with tears of sorrow.

“I have gone through much since we last saw each other,” she rejoined, pulling herself together with an effort. “But don’t let’s speak of the past. I thank God that I see you again and under such favorable auspices.”

Yes, good soul, she honestly meant what she said. One second sufficed for her to overcome the pain of her shattered hopes. Then she thought no more of herself, only of him, the loved one.

"Go, children," she said, smiling at them pleasantly, "go home, and we shall say the rest of the Hallel to-morrow."

The children kissed her, and held out their hands to the stranger.

"You have remained the same in your goodness and piety," remarked Henoch, when the children were gone.

Henoch reproached himself—had he not endeavored to value the golden kernel no matter in what shell it was enveloped? Yet for one moment he could forget the beautiful soul of his friend! The finest man may stumble over his own noble systems. Henoch tried to rid himself of the first impression. He caught Mine's hand, and inquired with insistent vivacity about everything concerning her, but she evaded him.

"Let's speak of more important things," she said, and drew him to the bay window.

Probably for the first time she was disconcerted by being alone with him, and her oppressed heart longed for fresh air. She

opened the window, and offered him the chair in the bay next to her work-table. The perfume of the hyacinths streamed into the room.

She gave him an account of all that had happened in the community—the new spirit at work, the preparation of the soil for his plans, especially by Joel Reinach, and the building of the magnificent House of God, which was waiting for the man—Henoch himself—who was destined to give it fresh life and a fresh soul. She also told him the names of the younger leaders of the community in whom he would find support. She had thought everything out so carefully, she put it all to him with such scrupulous concern that, overcome by emotion, he seized her hand—and she held his hand as quietly as a mother holds her son's. The more composedly she disclosed to him how she had studied only his success, the more strongly he felt his obligations to this noble girl. The first impression was forgotten,

the golden kernel shone so pure that a feeling of most grateful friendship warmed his whole heart.

“Isn’t everything that I am and will be your work, my dear friend?” he began in an excited voice.

At that moment a sound reached his ear which was very unusual in the quiet city. It was the clatter of a horse’s hoofs on the paving stones. Henoch involuntarily bent his head to look from the window, and a fairy flew by on a white steed, her blue veil fluttering behind her. As she passed, she sent a greeting up to the window of her friend.

“Who is—?” stammered Henoch.

“Bertha Reinach,” his friend replied quietly.

Mine told him of the lovely girl who had happily passed her crucial eighteenth year by dint of taking all sorts of exercise in the fresh air, and how she comforted her father and cared for him.

"Thank God," she said, "that in His mercy He has spared the noble old man this last child. She is a rare gem. You must go to Mr. Reinach at once, this very day."

Mine fairly insisted on his leaving her immediately. He dreamily promised to obey her, and she accompanied him to the door, where she pressed his hand mutely.

When she returned to the room, her glance involuntarily fell upon her reflection in the mirror, which hung between the two windows. She nodded her head several times as if to greet the picture and pass judgment upon it as *he* had done. Then she raised the prayer-book that had fallen from her hand, pressed a kiss upon it to make amends for the insult—this, according to an old custom—and quietly continued to say her Hallel. At the words, "Return unto thy rest, O my soul," she pressed the book to her breast, then calmly recited the prayer to the end.

Though it was May, the windows were

shut and the green hangings drawn in Joel Reinach's room. But a ray of sunlight penetrated the dark and fell across the room like a breath of spring, when the young divine enthusiastically set forth his soaring plans to the withered old man. Joel basked with fatherly delight in the youth's enlightened ideas. A faint color suffused his pale cheeks. Either joy found its way along the unaccustomed path from his heart to his face, or it reflected the light radiated by Henoah's young features.

"That's all extremely fine and great," said Reinach, and caressingly laid his trembling mummy hand on Henoah's shoulder. "But aren't you afraid the community is too contracted a field for your Alexander-like ideas? Isn't provincialism the very worst enemy of great conceptions?"

"I am not afraid," rejoined Henoah, with joyous self-confidence. "I am a child of this community, only an adopted child, perhaps, but I owe my education to its fatherly

protection. Just because I love it, I am sure to gain its love. I don't want to be an aggressive reformer. I want first to win the hearts of all by sparing and considering their sensibilities. Then the cultivation of the spirit will adjust itself. Why, up to this time the community in its disintegration has been like the scattered remnants of Judah after the destruction of the First Temple, when they took refuge in various places, and each worshipped God after his own fashion. But you, Mr. Reinach, like Ezra, built them a new Temple for the use of all, and I deem him happy who is called to be the Nehemiah to work and teach at your side!"

The old man smiled, and shook his finger threateningly at the young enthusiast.

"You know," he said, "those two, Ezra and Nehemiah, cast Judaism in the mold now honored in place of its contents?"

"Certainly," Henoch replied calmly, "and I honor the mold, because it has preserved the substance for thousands of years."

“And you mean to adapt yourself to the mold?”

“I do.”

“Against your inner convictions?”

“It is my conviction that the minister of a congregation is its microcosm. He may permit individuals to transgress forms, but he himself must not. I am not sacrificing my convictions, only my comfort, and I do so gladly. I would not destroy the relics that childish narrow-mindedness considers holy, but I would endeavor to remove this childish narrow-mindedness from those who are committed to my care. The time will come when the golden bud of pure belief will burst into blossom from the closed sheath. I will not live to see that time, but I mean to travel toward it, and I will lead my people along with me.”

This allusion to the evanescence of earthly things sent a quiver of pain across Reinach's face. He cast a melancholy glance at the blooming youth, and a foreboding passed

through his soul. He leaned back in his arm-chair exhausted, and put out his hand as if to say "Good-by." Henoch understood and arose. He had never been permitted to address a word of thanks to his benefactor, and now in the twilight of the chamber he bent over, under the pretext of groping for his hat, and pressed a soft kiss upon the withered hand. Reinach drew it back in surprise.

At that moment the door opened, and Bertha stepped in carrying a silver candelabrum, its lights shaded on one side by green screens. The light thus thrown back fell on the dazzling face, and surrounded it with a halo. In the simple white dress, closed at the throat, her loosened brown hair falling over it in abundant locks, the beautiful Amazon seemed transformed into a heavenly apparition. Henoch stared at her as at a vision. His senses strayed and grew confused. He could not make up his mind either to stay or to take leave.

"My daughter Bertha," said Reinach, presenting her.

"We have seen each other to-day already," said the girl, smiling.

Henoch found no word in response. As Bertha set the candelabrum down, the light chanced to fall on the old man's pale face. The sight frightened her. Forgetting the stranger's presence, she ran to the footstool, and caressingly asked her father if he felt sick.

"No," he said.

She kneeled before him, and slung both arms about his knees. He folded his hands over her mass of curls. Thus a sweet-smelling lily blooms at the foot of some leafless tree-trunk rent by lightning.

The young minister regarded her mutely. Then he bowed and left. When he stepped into the adjoining room, where a bright light burned, he held his hand before his eyes to prevent the glare from dispelling the dreamlike picture in his soul.

The door behind him opened, and Bertha stood before him.

"My father sends his best wishes for the success of your trial sermon. And I join him in his wishes most heartily."

Her young voice was melodious. Reddening, she stretched out her hand to him. Henoch did not know what he was doing when involuntarily he drew it to his lips.

He had promised Mine to give her an account of his interview with Reinach. Instead he rushed out into the spring night, down to the park, where the lilacs and jasmynes perfumed the air, then farther out through the lonely chestnut avenue to the Fulda. Here at last his stormy emotions subsided, and the thought of his great duty arose in his soul. He pondered on the text for his trial sermon.

"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal."

But he remembered the words of the Apostle were not suitable, and chose another text.

The decisive Sabbath came. The Temple was filled to its utmost capacity. After the scrolls of the Torah had been enveloped again in the brocade wrappings of the Reb-betzin's bridal gown, and the choir had sung a Hallelujah chorus, the young preacher stepped into the raised pulpit on the left of the Ark. A long black gown flowed about the slender figure, and a black cap like those worn by the popes of the Greek Church rested on the still blacker curls. Excitement had driven all the color from his face, and when he raised his large dark eyes soulfully toward Heaven, he no longer resembled the boy Jesus preaching in the Temple, but the transfigured prophet delivering the Sermon on the Mount to his disciples.

After a short prayer, which was begun in a shaking voice, but which, waxing in fervency, rose to Heaven as on wings, the

preacher paused to collect his thoughts before passing over to the text. He had chosen the words of Malachi: "Have we not all one father? Hath not one God created us? Why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers?"

Developing the thought, he showed how the family peaceably grouped about the father; the community grouped about the common sanctuary; the nation grouped about the common ruler; the races of the earth looking to one Ruler of the world; the earth itself and the endless systems of the stars harmoniously revolving about the common Creator—how all these are divided and held together by the unfathomable force of His love. With the whole of humanity the covenant had been sealed, and the Creator had guaranteed sacred, eternal rights to all His creatures. He who unlovingly persecutes his neighbor, desecrates the covenant on which the world is based. The Messianic

days foretold by the prophets bore as their sign the promise, that all the nations of the earth would recognize that He is One, and His name is One.

The sermon was marked by the absence of all false pathos, all sanctimoniousness. The tones came from the heart and went to the heart. When the young preacher lauded mildness, tolerance, and love as the means for reaching this highest goal, when he showed that human love is the offspring of the Divine conception of creation, when his words turned to tears, his tears to flames of the Holy Spirit, a breath of enthusiasm pervaded the building, a nameless impulse to love opened the sluice-gates of all hearts, each man would gladly have embraced his neighbor, and still more gladly the speaker in the pulpit. Like alder bushes the people nodded and hummed with subdued applause. The women's gallery, where handkerchiefs waved to and fro, resembled a ship with sails spread.

One woman's face lit with joy, but pale and tear-bedewed, leaned over the railing. Another, fresh and blooming, hid its blushes in the pages of the prayer-book.

With a short blessing the sermon ended, and a many-voiced Amen resounded from the choir. At the conclusion of the service the whole congregation surrounded the happy man to congratulate him.

On the stairs leading from the gallery Bertha and Mine met. Now it was Bertha who threw her arms about her friend and pressed a burning kiss on her colorless cheeks.

The one hour decided Henoch's fate. The congregation passed a unanimous vote in his favor. He became chief rabbi in the city in which several years before he had taken his meals turn and turn about.

First of all he went to his friend Mine, who received him with greater joy than he himself felt. He had attained his goal not *for* her but *through* her. That sufficed for the woman's noble soul.

And now began a happy and ceaseless activity. Henoch gave equal care to the reorganization of the service and to the instruction in the school. The whole congregation enthusiastically rallied to the support of the new minister. His enlightened ideas fired the younger members, and his Talmudic knowledge as well as his observance of the ritual precepts impressed the elders. He conferred almost daily with Joel Reinach, who seemed to be actually rejuvenated by contact with this fresh personality.

Bertha took part in all that went on. Her beautiful eyes with a look of rapture in them rested thoughtfully on the lips of the ardent speaker. She no longer needed to gallop about in the open air. She seemed happier and healthier when she sat next to her father and his friend, who had tacitly become a member of the family, in fact, its vivifying element.

And Henoch himself, how he longed for those hours of reunion!

The old man smiled upon this mute covenant of two souls. It seemed to him a gift of Providence that the girl who had been spared him by God should incline toward the man who had dedicated himself to God, a man, too, for whom he felt fatherly love. But he hesitated to touch the bud of this attachment with too rash a hand. He wanted it to unfold itself gradually. Yet he feared its development—not that he held his only child too precious for the poor and homeless man. But what if Henoch maintained silence from fear of the tender, perishable blossom, not from modest repression? What if he were already bound elsewhere? Here the picture arose in the old man's memory of a girl pleading touchingly in behalf of her protégé. Had he the right to permit the feeling of his unsuspecting child to ripen into passion? Should he by force unseal Henoch's mute lips? These were the doubts that tortured the old man.

And the clear mirror of Bertha's soul was also dimmed. When the hour approached for Henoch to come, her heart began to beat violently, and if he failed to pay his visit, anxious thoughts buzzed through her brain. But if he put in appearance, all the blood rushed from her heart to her temples, and she hastened to hide her glowing face in the twilight of her father's room. Then she listened to Henoch's words, calm and satisfied—she felt no desire for anything more on earth. But when he left, what disquietude! Her soul, which had always revolved about her father alone, had lost its measure and balance. However, she had not yet found a name for this agony of suspense.

The emotions that tore Henoch's heart were the stormiest of all. The first impression made upon him by the dazzling Amazon had stupefied him. Her beauty fell upon him like a stroke of lightning, fairly scorching him. The sight of her, again, at

her household duties, caring for her father, glorified and transfigured her as the moonlight lends soul to a statue. When the tender flower, so miraculously preserved, began to incline toward him and intoxicate his senses with its perfume, when to see the girl became a sweet habit, a veritable necessity, he suddenly started back in fright from the dream of happiness—a happiness that seemed unattainable to him. Might he raise his glance and stretch out his hand to grasp her? Was it not his duty to avoid the gleaming pitfall? He tried to—in vain! He would pass the door of Reinach's house without entering, and wander through the streets only to come back again like a moth to the flame. Turning his glance from her with difficulty, he would endeavor to steep his whole soul in earnest conversations with her father, though he felt how his eyes and his soul were drawn to her with magic chains. Often he felt the impulse to confide all his feelings to his friend Mine, yet

in her presence he locked the secret only the more tightly within his bosom.

Thus three noble souls tortured and tormented themselves, three souls felt the same and desired the same, yet sought in vain for the word of deliverance. Will no good genius come to lay it on their lips?

It was in the late summer when the days were growing perceptibly shorter. Gossamer threads floated in the air. Mine, whose one diversion was the theatre, was going across to the playhouse when Henoch met her. She saw his excitement in his eyes.

"I was just coming to you, my dear friend," he said.

"Let us go back. The times are past when the theatre fascinated me. I go to the play only from habit. Let us rather return home and talk."

"No," said Henoch, making a mighty effort. "No, let us dream ourselves back into those times again. Permit me to escort you as I did then."

They walked across the large square without speaking. Here he had once taught her the constellations!

He did not notice that Mine steered him past the theatre, and turned into the avenue, already deserted, which led to the beautiful Park. On the one side were houses facing the Park; the other side was lined with shade trees. It was solitary and still, the silence broken only by the birds chirping their evening melodies.

Mine seized Henoch's hand.

"You spoke of old times," she said. "Then you confided all your thoughts to me. Why are you more reserved now? Has your good fortune made you miserly?"

"My good fortune! The good fortune I owe only to you!"

"No. Providence has granted you another and a higher piece of fortune. All you lack is the courage to seize it. Don't speak," Mine continued smiling, "I know it. You love Bertha, and Bertha loves you.

She herself told me. She told me by a kiss on my cheek after your trial sermon had moved and uplifted all hearts in the Temple. Even earlier I had suspected this un hoped happiness, and praised God who had reserved it for you. Why does it worry you?"

Henoch, powerless to utter a word, pressed her hand mutely to his throbbing breast.

"Do you doubt the feelings of her noble father?" Mine went on. "Or do you doubt your own worthiness? Or do you tremble before the awful fate that overtook Bertha's sisters? She is strong now, made proof against all harm by the wonderful strength of love. And even if she were lent you for only a brief span, that brief span would be worth a whole lifetime."

"You say this to me!" Henoch cried, completely overcome, and tears of admiration rose to his eyes.

"Mustn't I?" she replied, smiling.

Mustn't I, since you have no mother to tell you to take comfort and pluck up courage? God created you two for each other. At the right time He will send you His messenger to lead you together. And now, good-by!"

She quickly tore herself away to hide her emotion, and hurried off to the theatre. But at the corner of the street she stood still and looked back to see if Henoah was following her. Still overpowered by his feelings, he was looking up to Heaven as if to beseech the messenger to descend, the messenger she had promised him. Her moist gray eyes lighted with a rapid decision. She sped across the square to the house of Joel Reinach.

The manner with which she asked to see Mr. Reinach was very different from her manner that first time—not shy and trembling, but joyously resolute.

Bertha greeted her and expressed concern for the young man, who had not paid

his usual visit. Mine calmed her fears with a smile.

"You will see him to-day still," she said, and leaving her to wait for her lover, she entered the room of the old man.

He gave her a friendly welcome.

"What blessings do you bring me?" he said as that other time, and invited her to be seated.

But she stood before him erect, like a messenger from God.

"The best," she cried, "the happiness of your child! Bertha loves and is loved."

Reinach shrank before this violent assault upon the sacred privacy of his family, and took a step backward; but she caught his hand, and held it between both of hers.

"Don't be angry with me," she cried, "I know what I am doing. The happiness of those dearest to us is involved. Just see how the two loving souls are consumed by the torment of uncertainty. See how your daughter flourishes in this new element.

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Where would you know her more sheltered and protected than in the heart of that noblest of men? On this very spot you once granted me a thing he never dared to hope for. O grant me now what he doesn't dare even to desire! You yourself speak the word of deliverance! Can you, magnanimous as you are, be chary of a single hour which would make us and our dear ones happy?"

Tears glittered in her eyes, and the old man's cheeks were wet with tears. He laid his hand on her head as in blessing.

"Don't call me magnanimous," he whispered. "You have shamed and humbled me," and he drew her head to his breast, and kissed her forehead. Mine trembled, as if touched by a heavenly kiss of consecration. The beauty of her soul glorified her pale face.

The door had opened softly, and Bertha and Henoch regarded the pair in amazement. Reinach looked up.

“My children!” he exclaimed, and stretched his arms toward them. Bertha flew to him, and hid her glowing face on her father’s breast. Henoch stood dumbfounded by his happiness. The old man nodded to him, and grasped his and Bertha’s hands. But suddenly he recollected himself, and pulled Mine to him.

“This is the only hand from which you may receive her!” he said with an affectionate smile.

When Henoch, intoxicated by joy, put his arms about the old man, then about Mine, and last of all about Bertha, no sound escaped anyone’s lips to break the sacred silence in the half-lighted room, through which the spirit of eternal love sent its heavenly harmonies.

The marriage was solemnized in the autumn, in Joel Reinach’s room. The officiating minister was a friend of Henoch’s, and shared his aspirations. Mine was the only witness. Mr. Reinach had given her a

piece of costly silk for a dress to wear on the occasion.

At the end of the ceremony, when the young couple went to their new home, which the congregation had built for them next to the Temple, Mine accompanied them to the threshold, and embraced them with a motherly blessing.

Then she returned to her little room, ripped up the new silk dress, sewed the pieces together into a cover for the pulpit, and edged it with the Brabant lace that Joel Reinach had returned to her—for her bridal gown!

At her husband's desire, Bertha, according to prescribed form, hid her abundant curls under a white cap, which framed her face like a sacred aureole. Happiness had transfigured her, but Mine's appearance was even more radiant when she looked at the two beloved people from whom she was now inseparable.

Mine laid three fine children on the grand-

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father's knees—Job saw new life blossoming on the ruins. He closed his eyes in peace. He knew his Bertha was under the protection of a noble husband and a loving mother.

All would have been well, had not the enemy of happiness, death-dealing cholera, at that time stalked through Germany on its tour of devastation. It raged in the community, and the noble minister was ever at the side of the sick and the dying. But the fate of the beautiful on earth overtook him also. The poison entered his system, and after a short painful struggle his winged soul flew to the Source of all love.

Mine stood at his bed next to Bertha in mute despair. She had but one prayer: that the angel of death might kiss her, too. But he preferred the blooming flower to the withered one, and he kissed Bertha's young, full lips. Bertha and Henoch were buried on the same day.

When Mine saw what was dearest to her

on earth taken from her, she turned to Providence broken and bowed, with the cry :

“ What should I do here still ? ”

The children's voices reached her ears. They were playing and chattering in the adjoining room. She understood the answer of Providence.

She became the mother of the orphans, and they prospered under her care. The oldest had his father's dark curls and his large, deep eyes. The youngest, scarcely two years old, had the seraphic beauty of its mother.

In her care of the beloved children Mine found her youth again. She played with them, told them fairy tales, and sang “ To Alexis,” and “ In Myrtill's Ruined Hut.”

When the children gathered blossoms in the orangery, and Mine's eyes wandered over the grassy stretch of Bowling Green, she greeted the departed ones in spirit, and knew they were smiling down a blessing on the guardian of their children, whom she

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educated in the spirit of their father, and in sacred remembrance of their sainted parents.

She lived to be an old woman, and saw all three established in life. When she closed her eyes for the last time, three mourners stood at her side.

They wanted to bury her next to her parents, the old Rav and Mrs. Süß. But there was no room. The dead press upon one another like the living. By chance a little plot was found next to Henoeh and Bertha.

There lies Rav's Mine!

JEPHTHAH'S DAUGHTER

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About nine miles to the south of the capital are two villages whose boundaries meet. The dunghill between two low clay huts is the end of the one and the beginning of the other. Hof and Breitenbach are inhabited for the most part by Jewish peddlers and Schnorrers. Situated in a barren plain, they look like a daub of mud when viewed from afar, the very type of poverty and neglect. The little houses crouch under gray straw or shingle roofs; the broken panes are stopped up with paper, or hung with a dirty rag instead of curtains; and only one house in the place boasts two stories. It belongs to Wolf Breitenbach, the richest among the poor.

Anyone who on week days passes down the long unpaved street, on both sides of which lie huts separated from one another

by shabby yards and plots of grass with decaying wooden fences in between, probably supposes he is wandering through some miserable disinterred Pompeii. Not a soul to be seen, no lowing of cattle, no neighing of horses. Hof and Breitenbach possess none of the four-footed kind. The men are away traversing the country, the women lock themselves into their huts, and the liveliest sight is afforded by a couple of black unkempt children wading barefoot through the mud-puddles after geese.

But on Friday evening at dusk all the windows are suddenly illumined like the cabins of the Flying Dutchman. From the ground floor of Wolf Breitenbach's house a seven-beaked lamp sends its gleam over the street, and men, women, and children, washed and furbished up, go humming and swaying to the room set aside for prayers in the rich man's house. Later they return to their own homes, now scoured and lighted up.

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Throughout the following day, the Sabbath, the villages continue to be enlivened. In the afternoon the boys and girls stroll through the meadows, the elders converse with animated gestures in the street, and the matrons sit before their huts, their hair carefully hidden under black silk caps, while the children scuffle over a handful of hazel nuts.

Sunday morning the villages are dead again. For as soon as the "week" begins, our Phœnicians sail from Sidon and Tyre, to go along their trade routes to their usual little emporiums. Many of them "schnorr." They collect the tribute of "week money" in the houses of the city, also a bite to eat and a shelter for the night. The profits of their mendicancy suffices to "make Shabbes" at home for them and their families, and even leave bread behind for the week. But the better element goes trading; which consists, you might say, of importing and exporting. In the city they

buy up old clothes, thread, needles, and ribbons, then carry them to the villages and farms of the vicinity to exchange them in primitive fashion for young geese. The geese constitute the article of export. The women and children at home fatten them up by the stuffing process. The geese eat and grow stout against their will. When they attain the right proportions, they are killed according to the ritual. With the seal of orthodoxy attached to their necks, they are borne off to the city in large knapsacks, and sold there to the Jewish wives and fathers after much bargaining on both sides.

Each goose-dealer has his "houses," and woe to the man who competes with him on his field. Curses rain down, shaming the imprecations on Mount Ebal. Thus each man learns to respect the emporium of his neighbor, and trembles before his righteous wrath.

Most dreaded of all was Tobias Hof. He had the rounds of the best houses in the

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city, and knew how to give the leanest goose the most presentable appearance, by blowing through its windpipe until it displayed a fine swelling bosom. If he was offered one half of his demand, he swore by his bliss in Gan-Eden he could not let up one red heller. Finally he sacrificed one-half his bliss in the next world to the necessities of this world.

He was a tall, scrawny individual, with a long eagle nose, and curly black hair, somewhat grizzled. He could carry twelve heavy geese in his knapsack without wearying, and his long patriarch's cane struck the ground surely and firmly as the Alpine stick of a chamois hunter. His wife was a master hand at stuffing geese and a virtuoso in stripping feathers.

But she fell sick of a liver disease and died. Perhaps the cell she shared with her geese was the cause of her death, perhaps it was the spirits of her victims revenging themselves on her for their preternaturally distended livers. Tobias mourned not only

his life-companion, but also the prop of his trade, the feeder of his geese and of his one child. Could little Täubchen, a girl of scarcely ten, replace her mother in caring for the geese? Impossible! He saw his source of a livelihood running dry, saw the geese of his competitors winging high over his head, saw the best houses in the city slipping from him.

These thoughts broke Tobias Hof's strength and courage. Nobody understood his outbursts of despair, for he had never coddled his wife with overmuch tenderness. Only Wolf Breitenbach's sly eye penetrated the depths of his heart.

"Rebbe Tobias," he said one evening, while sitting alone with the mourner, "why do you act as if the world had been nailed up? Are you the first one upon whom God, blessed be He, has visited such a thing as this? I had to give up my wife, too, peace be with her, more than sixteen years ago."

"You can talk, Rebbe Wolf. You're a

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rich man, and trade in clothes and goods, which you can get anywhere ready-made. But who's to stuff my geese for me, now that she, peace be with her, is no longer here?"

"Rebbe Tobias, don't be angry with me. You're talking Shtuss. First of all: how do you make it out that I'm a rich man? Because I don't do things by halves? That's why I'm Wolf Breitenbach. But now as to you—certainly, I don't want to be unjust to your wife, peace be with her, but there are other people beside her who can stuff geese. There's Bule Bettenhausen for one, the widow who peddles old clothes. You know, her son, Long Meyer, patches the clothes up, and she sells them. Well, she can help you, and the child will soon learn from her. Stuffing geese is no magic, and little Täubchen is very smart for her age. If you give Bule a couple of groschen, she'll come to you for a few hours every day to stuff your geese."

"But the couple of groschen!" Tobias cried vehemently. "If I haven't got them?"

"That's the reason I'm talking to you, you Chammer!" Wolf replied still more vehemently. "I'll give you a few dollars, and you'll pay them back, small sums at a time. I won't ask interest. Wolf Breitenbach doesn't do things by halves."

The week's stubbly growth on Tobias Hof's face had turned him into an old man. He was bowed and crushed. But now he straightened himself up, all his dying hopes rising within him again.

"Rebbe Wolf," he said, "that's more than I could ever have hoped for. If you need anyone to run through fire for you, all you have to say is: 'Tobias, run!'"

A few days later the contract with Bule Bettenhausen was closed. Every morning and every evening she came over to give the geese their feed and instruct little Täubchen, who displayed remarkable acquisitive-

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ness in learning to stuff the fowl. Tobias Hof returned to his trade, but his pride was in a measure broken. The sense of dependence on Wolf Breitenbach stifled the words on his lips, and toned down his gestures. He began to stoop, and his knapsack was not so heavily weighted as formerly.

Täubchen was always referred to as "little," because she was unusually small for her eleven years. Nevertheless, she was a fresh and healthy child. After the Friday afternoon wash, her round cheeks glowed like two newly plucked apples. Her forehead was low, lower even than that of the Venus de Medici. The black hair grew in deep on it, and fluttered about her neck like the mane of a filly, except on the Sabbath, when it was braided into plaits. Eyebrows black as if pencilled with charcoal arched over eyes glowing like charcoal on fire. The little teeth shone like a squirrel's, though she did not know the luxury of a tooth-brush even from hearsay. Her gar-

ments consisted of a little brown woolen smock-frock, frequently patched and never changed, and a coarse shirt of huckaback changed every Friday evening.

The saying, "salt and bread make cheeks red," was well illustrated in Täubchen. For this was her fare the week through, unless on her trips across country a peasant woman presented her with an apple.

Täubchen, too, now pursued an import and export trade. The import consisted in cramming peas, beans, and dried carrots down the throats of the geese, an act of force she had learned from Mrs. Bule to perform most skilfully, with the grace of a Leda playing with her winged companions. The export branch of the trade was going to the neighboring villages and farms to drive home the young geese her father had acquired there. An osier switch was her rod of command. In a clear voice she sang the Shir ha-Ma'alos, which her father intoned less melodiously every Sabbath eve.

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It was noon of a lovely summer day when Täubchen set out for Martinhagen, to do her father's bidding and fetch a flock of young geese home. She had a white cloth bound about her head to protect her from the sun, and the black eyes flashed from under it right roguishly as she passed the low house where Mrs. Bule lived. Long Meyer was sitting at the window patching a pair of old trousers. He was a tall, lanky fellow of seventeen or eighteen, with a long neck always stuck forward, and long arms and hands. His nose, too, was long. The only short thing about him was his hair, which lay close to his head like Astrachan fur. He was so engrossed in his work that Täubchen had to call up:

"How d'ye do, Meyer?"

He stretched his neck from the window.

"Where are you going, Täubchenleb?"

"To Martinhagen, to fetch geese."

"What! Six miles across country! You're not afraid?"

Täubchen laughed aloud.

"There's nothing on me to steal, so nobody will rob me. And nobody will kill me, either. But how would it be if you came along?"

"If I only could,"—Meyer opened his eyes—"but I mayn't."

"You mayn't?"

"No, Täubchenleb," he said, looking back of him timidly. "I'm afraid of my mother."

"If I were as long as you, I wouldn't be afraid of a soul! Good-by!"

She ran off, her little bare feet twinkling in the sun. Meyer kept his neck stretched from the window until she disappeared around the corner.

Täubchen had soon left the village behind her, and was walking sturdily between endless potato patches and sorry-looking fields of grain. Here and there she tore off a ripe stalk, and crunched the kernels between her white mouse teeth. Or she pulled a red

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poppy from its waving stem to stick it over her ear, between the white cloth and the black hair. At the brook, though there was a plank across, she waded through the water to wash the dust from her feet. And here with an old broken penknife she cut the osier twig with which to drive the geese. The foot-bath visibly refreshed her, for she kept up the Shir ha-Ma'alos in even a clearer voice, until she saw the red-tiled roof of the farm house at Martinhagen shining at the end of an avenue of poplars. She began to walk more slowly.

The people of the house were eating their evening meal under an old pear-tree in the courtyard, in front of the low broad building. A large bowl of boiled potatoes and a dish of lard stood on the table. The huge black loaf bore the sign of the cross on its back.

Täubchen went up to the farmer's wife, and asked for the geese her father had sent her to fetch. While the woman was gone

after them to the poultry yard, the men and maid servants scrutinized the Jewish child, who had taken off her head-cloth in the shade of the pear-tree, and unbound her black mane.

"Will you have something to eat with us?" a girl called out, and held a piece of bread spread with lard toward her.

Täubchen made a wry face at sight of the lard, and repelled the offer with an excited gesture. A tall flaxen-haired fellow with watery blue eyes seemed to divine her feelings.

"The little black imp is disgusted at the thought of eating our bread," he growled, and spreading a piece of bread thickly with lard, called out, "Come here, Shicksel! You make our geese kosher, so I'll make you yourself kosher!"

Everybody laughed merrily, and the fellow made a dive for Täubchen, catching her about the body with his mighty right arm. With his left hand he tried to ram the bread

and lard into her mouth. But the little girl pressed her teeth together, and struck out at her tormentor's fresh face so lustily with her small fists that the features of the Christian Teuton were soon quite distorted.

"Beast of a Jewess!" he yelled.

"Let the child alone!" called out the farmer's wife, who had come on the scene, and punched his side with her good strong hand. "Shame on you, Hans Ludwig! Here are your geese," she continued quietly. "There are five. Your father marked them himself by pulling out their tail feathers. Will you eat something? Potatoes or bread?"

"Thank you, I don't care for anything," replied Täubchen, looking askance at the dish of lard, and tying on the white cloth. The farmer's wife looked displeased, then thrust her hand into her pocket, and drew out a great red June apple.

"Well, that's kosher, isn't it?" she said smiling. Täubchen laughed; too, and sank

her little white teeth into it. But she quickly bethought herself, stuck the apple into the pocket of her smock-frock, and drove and enticed her geese together.

“Get them home safe,” said the farmer’s wife. “And tell your father I need flannel for swaddling clothes. Do you hear?”

Täubchen merely nodded her head, for she needed all her words to drive out the geese, which had gone cackling in search of morsels in their customary mud-puddles.

The avenue of poplars was traversed without any mischance, and in the open country the young geese followed their leader more willingly. She spoke and sang to them, beating time with the osier switch, and so keeping her quintet together beautifully. Soon the ford through the brook was reached. Here the geese scattered, swimming about in the water, fluttering their wings, and cackling. At the very moment the little leader summoned all her

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talents as a strategist to range her disbanded forces, an enemy broke out from ambush in the undergrowth of osiers. The flaxen-haired farmhand and two half-grown churls in blue smock-frocks had slipped to the ford by way of the fields. While the two aides frightened the geese away with wild halloos, Hans Ludwig triumphantly moved upon the frightened girl.

"My geese, my geese!" she cried, and wanted to rush after them. But Hans Ludwig held her fast.

"Wait, Shicksel, I owe you an answer for the way you treated me."

"Let me go," screamed Täubchen, and defended herself as best she could.

The farmhand clutched her tighter and tighter.

"Shema Yisroel!" the child cried out in despair. "My geese, my geese!"

The time of miracles is not past. Israel heard the appeal. A fellow, the length of a tree, with black woolly hair, swinging a long

pole torn from a neighboring bean field, suddenly sprang upon the flaxen-haired Teuton, and dealt him a heavy blow on his broad shoulders.

"Let the child go, or I'll kill you!" he thundered.

Hans Ludwig, startled, loosed his grasp on his victim, and whistled through his fingers for his comrades. But these had gone astray in the underbrush of osiers a-chasing the geese, and when the bully realized they would not come, he merely clenched his fists and skulked away.

Täubchen could not believe her eyes.

"Meyer! You? Really, you? How do you come to be here?"

"I followed you, Täubchenleb, and came just in time—when that ruffian was about to do something to you."

Täubchen laughed from behind her tears.

"What could he have done to me? He wouldn't have killed me. But my geese!"

"We'll get them together. Don't worry,"

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Long Meyer answered, walking very erect and shouldering the bean pole like a bayonet.

Täubchen looked at him in amazement. They walked along the brook up-stream.

"Wait, I'll sing," said Täubchen, and began to troll her melody. First one came swimming, then a second, and a third. They had crept under the reeds and osiers to escape their pursuers. Now all five came waddling through the shallower water of the brook. Täubchen wanted to lure them to the bank; she sang in vain.

"I'll help you," said Meyer, and he, too, began to sing the same Shir ha-Ma'alos, but in a voice that rang far and wide.

"Lord, what a voice you have!" Täubchen marvelled.

As in a theatre the buzz and hum of conversation suddenly ceases when the tenor begins his aria, so the geese craned their necks toward the singer in astonishment, and one after the other waddled to the bank as if to bring him homage. Täubchen

stroked their wet feathers and gave them crumbs of bread. Now they gladly followed her lead.

Täubchen walked along beside Meyer. In putting her hand into her pocket for the crumbs, she had felt the apple, and now held it hidden in her hand.

"Meyer," she said, "do me the favor and take this apple. The farmer's wife gave it to me. Please, do!"

"If you beg me, Täubchen," was the knightly reply of the Jewish St. George.

But Täubchen was eyeing the apple in embarrassment.

"You mustn't be disgusted. I bit into one side of it. You can eat the other side."

Meyer scrutinized the little incisions running in a regular half-moon across one side of the apple, and bit on the very same spot.

"Thank you, Täubchenleb."

They walked along together for some time without speaking. Täubchen did not want to disturb him in the eating of the

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apple. When he finally threw the core away, she took up the word, but continued to drive her little flock with gentle applications of the switch.

"Tell me, Meyer, where did you suddenly get your courage from? You're usually so afraid."

"You know," he replied, smiling shrewdly, "I'm really not afraid. But I'll tell you something, Täubchen, and you mustn't say a word about it to a soul—my mother wants me to pretend I'm afraid, because, she says, if they think I'm chicken-hearted, they won't enlist me in the army."

"And why don't you want to go into the army?"

"I couldn't mend the old clothes for her, and I'd have to go to the city."

"Well, would that be so terrible? I'd go to the city any minute. Lord, what my father doesn't tell me about the city! Nothing but big houses with nothing but rich people living in them."

"That's according to the way you look at it," said Meyer, with superior worldly wisdom. "A rich man in one city can be a poor man in a bigger city. Now, in our place, they say Wolf Breitenbach is rich?"

"Well, isn't he? Hasn't he his own house, with two stories, and my father once said Wolf Breitenbach has money, much money, at least two thousand dollars."

Meyer smiled and shrugged his shoulders.

"I only wish you and I and our parents had the difference between two thousand and what he actually has! But what do we care? If God only keeps you and my mother well, I'm satisfied, and don't ask to go to the city."

He looked at her good-humoredly with his little black eyes. Täubchen glanced up at him again, and came to a stand.

"I haven't even thanked you, Meyer."

"What for?"

"For having come just when that farm-hand attacked me."

She reached him her hand.

"Shtuss!" replied Meyer, reddening.
"Even if I hadn't come, he wouldn't have done anything to you."

They arrived at the village. The girl paused.

"Now, Meyer, you go first. It doesn't look right for you to be walking behind the geese."

"I'm not walking behind the geese. I'm walking behind you," answered St. George.

Täubchen told no one of her adventure, and refrained from speaking of it even with Meyer. She quietly went on stuffing geese, and he quietly went on patching up old clothes. When people talked of Long Meyer, and how afraid he was of everybody and everything, she would make a queer face.

Next year, when she had to transport another batch of geese from Martinhagen, she sent a challenging look at the help in the yard. She would gladly have humbled

the flaxen-haired bully with an allusion to her hero. But she did not see him. A maid told her Hans Ludwig had been draughted into the army.

Old Bule trembled when she heard of the recruiting commission.

“Good God, now they’ll take my Meyer from me, too!”

Tobias drew his mouth up scornfully, and said:

“That chicken-hearted fellow! Why, they wouldn’t have any use for him.”

Bule smiled within herself, and Täubchen had to turn her face away.

In the meanwhile Täubchen’s charges throve most wonderfully under her care. She had fully replaced her mother. Mrs. Bule only gave occasional star performances in stuffing.

The great holidays were over, an autumnal frost had nipped the leaves of the potatoes, and the important season for the goose business was drawing near. The Jewish

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housewives were beginning to flay enormous numbers of fattened geese in order to lay in their store of winter fat.

A whole dozen of perfect specimens bulging with fat were lying ready on the boards in Tobias Hof's room. He regarded them with mixed feelings. The pure delight of old was long gone from him. His obligation toward Wolf Breitenbach, to whom he was beholden not only for the loan of money, but also, alas! for consideration in the repayment of it, pressed like the yoke of slavery upon his shoulders, which no longer felt their old force to carry an entire dozen.

"Täubchenleb," he said, mournfully wagging his head, "Tobias Hof is getting old."

"What stuff you imagine, papa! Why, nothing's the matter with you. May God keep you as you are a hundred years! But you could do me a great favor. Let me carry six of the geese, and you carry the other six. Then I'll get a chance to see the

city. Isn't it a shame for me to be nearly thirteen years old and never to have been farther from this place than Martinshagen? Papa, don't say a word! You carry six, and I'll carry the other six."

"Not a bit of it. You won't carry more than four. I'll carry the other eight."

Täubchen rejoiced over the compromise, and got the knapsacks ready for herself and her father. When she went to the kitchen to hunt up her one pair of shoes in order to smear them with fresh oil, she surprised her father in the act of blowing through the tube of a clay pipe into the gullets of the geese. He was puffing with the full force of his lungs.

"What are you doing, papa?" exclaimed the curious child.

"Nothing," muttered the old man, disconcerted. "It's only for looks."

Täubchen maintained silence. But while packing her four geese into the knapsack, she pressed upon them with all her might,

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until a soft whistle announced the escape of the deceiving air.

"So," triumphed the little black kobold, "this is for looks, too!" Relieved in spirits, she heaved the burden to her shoulders.

The hut was locked, and the key carried to Mrs. Bule. Long Meyer was sitting at the window. Täubchen nodded to him.

"I'm going to the city. What shall I bring you?"

"Another apple."

Meyer stretched his long neck from the window, and looked after them for many minutes.

"What sort of an apple does that long Lemech want?" asked Tobias.

"O, stuff!" was the evasive answer.

Father and child walked along together in the autumn morning without exchanging many words. But Täubchen once broke the silence to ask:

"Papa, about how rich is Wolf Breitenbach?"

"Richer than I am," the old man growled in ill-humor. "I wish he owed me money, instead of I him!"

At the little inn, "The Last Heller," he ordered a drink. He offered Täubchen a sip, but she shook her head, and bit into the crust of bread she had drawn from the pocket of her smock-frock.

Business went well. The little black maiden was a luck-bringing companion for the peevish old man. The housewives put questions to her, and laughed at her straightforward, unconcerned answers. A child at one of the houses wanted to give her a candy, but she did not know what to do with it.

When Tobias swore to the justness of his prices, people would turn to her.

"Is it true?"

"What do I know?" she would reply, with a shrug of her shoulders.

The most difficult encounter was at the old Rav's house.

"Täubchenleb," said Tobias, as they

climbed the stairs, "the Rebbetzin is a devil. You mustn't be afraid of her."

"I'm not afraid of anybody," the child laughed.

While Tobias was haggling with the Rebbetzin in the kitchen, Rav's Mine—the old Rav's daughter—stepped in from the other room.

"Is that your child, Tobias?" she asked in High German.

"That is my child," he answered, imitating her accent.

Mine seized Täubchen's hand, and drew her from the kitchen into a room whose white floor and white curtains hanging over bright windows fairly dazzled the child. She came near belying her own statement—for an instant she was actually afraid of this aristocratic person with long black locks and long white fingers. But when the lady stroked her hair affectionately and kissed her, she quickly regained her former ease of manner.

While kissing her on the forehead, Mine's glance fell upon the girl's dainty ear.

"What dear little ears!" she exclaimed, but continued in friendly reproof, "Didn't you wash them to-day?"

"Is it Friday?" the child answered, staring at her. "You wash only on Friday."

Mine nodded, as if now she understood something hitherto obscure, and whispered:

"Poor child, you probably have no mother?"

"I've been an orphan for three years," replied Täubchen, and her large black eyes grew moist.

"Did you learn anything at home?" Mine went on with her questioning, smoothing the rebellious hairs away from the child's forehead.

"O, yes! I can stuff geese, and strip feathers. Bule Bettenhausen says I can do it as well as she can."

"Can you read and write, or knit and sew?"

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Täubchen shook her head.

"And how old do you say you are?"

"Thirteen years—may I live to be a hundred!"

Mine smiled, and rose. She opened a drawer, from which she drew a gay silk handkerchief, and tied it about the child's neck. Täubchen stood with parted lips, her little white teeth gleaming between. Mine kissed her mouth shut.

"Would you like to stay here in the city and learn something, Täubchen?" she asked caressingly.

The child's eyes filled with tears.

"I should like to, but my father wouldn't give in."

Mine walked quickly into the kitchen. The haggling had come to an end, and Mrs. Süss, the Rebbetzin, had just carried the geese into the pantry.

Now began a short conversation, unfortunate on the one side, attended by much shrugging of the shoulders on the other.

Tobias interpolated only a few words into the flow of Mine's plea.

"Easily said!" "A difficult matter!" and so on.

"Consider it, Tobias," Mine concluded, "and give me your answer the next time you come to the city."

Father and daughter returned home in silence, neither imparting to the other the thoughts awakened in their hearts by Rav's Mine. Tobias calculated how much money he needed for buying in his goods, how much for rent, and how much for coal and oil. Scarcely five dollars remained for paying part of the oppressive debt.

At home they found Mrs. Bule in great excitement. Wolf Breitenbach had just returned from the county town, and told her that Meyer Bettenhausen's name was on the list of recruits for next spring.

"Why such a to-do?" Tobias tried to comfort her. "It's a long time till spring. We might all of us be dead by that time."

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The next day was Friday. Täubchen had never before washed her ears so carefully.

On Saturday after the Mincha service, Tobias went to see Wolf Breitenbach.

"Reb Wolf," he said, "it's not right to discuss business on Shabbes, but we don't get a chance to see each other the whole week. I didn't make a good sale of my geese, and I can't pay more than five dollars on my debt. I would have brought the money right along, but you know I don't carry anything on Shabbes."

"Have I asked for payment?" demanded Wolf, gruffly. "Why do you come on Shabbes with such talk? If you need the money still, why don't you keep it? You know Wolf Breitenbach doesn't do things by halves. By the way, Reb Tobias, why did you take Täubchen to the city with you?"

The magnanimity of his creditor so humbled Tobias that he would not admit his physical weakness.

"I want to tell you about that, Reb Wolf," he said, taking a pinch of snuff the rich man offered him. "I've been thinking a long time that the child is growing up wild and neglected at home, and whether I shouldn't be doing better to get her into some place in the city where she could learn something."

"Reb Tobias," answered Wolf, nodding graciously, "the thought does you credit. Täubchen is a good child with an open mind, and knows how to make people like her. If she were to learn something worth the while, she could make her fortune. She might be a child's nurse or even a governess. And I'll tell you what—last year Lindenfeld, an educated man, and rich—he owns his own house in the city—he married his servant girl. Take my advice, Reb Tobias, and see to it that Täubchen goes to the city. What sense is there in keeping her here? All she'd be fit for is for Bule Bettenhausen's long Schlemihl."

"God forbid!" cried Tobias, sneezing. "I've already spoken with Rav's Mine, and I hope she'll help me. But my business, Rebbe Wolf! I'm away streaking through the country all week. Who will stuff my geese for me? Shall I pay someone again? How? I still owe you so much money! How can I help myself? Tell me!"

Wolf Breitenbach drew a long face at this delicate allusion to a fresh loan. But suddenly he let his breath out sharply between his teeth, struck by a brilliant thought.

"Reb Tobias," he said with a smile, "I'll tell you a story. Once there were two men, one was blind, the other was lame. Neither of them, nebbich, could get away by himself from the place where he was. But the lame man climbed on the blind man's back, and told him how to go. Then both could get away."

"Well, where do I come in?" asked Tobias, impatiently.

"I'll tell you," Wolf Breitenbach contin-

ued didactically. "You want to let your Täubchen learn something—you can't get along alone. They're going to take Bule Bettenhausen's Long Meyer away from her to the army—*she* can't get along alone. Now, you take Bule into your house—you're both old enough and ugly enough for nobody to say anything bad about you—and the two of you can get along together. She saves her rent, and stuffs your geese, and you can sell her old clothes for her. And if you should occasionally need a dollar or two, you know Wolf Breitenbach doesn't do things by halves."

The very same evening Tobias told the story to old Bule, and she decided that if, God forbid, her Meyer should be taken from her, she would accept Tobias Hof's proposition. However, it's a long time till spring!

In the meantime Täubchen went to the city again with her father, on this occasion very well washed, though it was not a Friday. The matter was talked over in detail

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with Rav's Mine, and it was decided that Täubchen be taken in by the Sisterhood, and taught everything a child's nurse or chambermaid needs to know. The president of the institution would provide a good place for her. She was to come to the city immediately after the Passover, and Rav's Mine guaranteed to get her the necessary outfit.

Tobias yielded to every suggestion. Passing the house of Lindenfeld the educated, he looked it up and down, and with satisfaction noted three stories.

The winter passed, the snowdrops came, and the first chestnut leaves, and the recruiting commission.

"Make yourself small," Mrs. Bule admonished her Meyer. But the maternal advice glanced off from his mind, meeting resistance in the thought that Täubchen would be in the city.

While being measured, he drew himself up to his greatest height, and struck so mar-

tial an attitude that he was immediately enlisted for the fusileers to be held in reserve for the first division.

Poor knight-errant! Little he suspected that his regiment of fusileers would not go into barracks in the capital, but in another city, far distant from the lady of his heart.

So Meyer marched to the south, while Täubchen, her little bundle on her back, set out for the north in the company of her father.

Wolf Breitenbach with rare generosity gave her six linen handkerchiefs and a piece of printed calico for aprons, and on parting kissed and blessed her. Dresses and undergarments had already been collected for her by Rav's Mine, who since the death of the Rebbetzin had devoted herself to the Sisterhood with redoubled zeal. Tobias took leave of Täubchen.

"Do not disgrace me. I will come to look after you every week."

The Sisterhood had been founded in the

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"twenties" by the Jewish girls of the capital, to supplement the work of the Woman's Auxiliary, which provided for families in general. The aim of the Sisterhood was to care for orphaned girls and train them to become good domestics. If special talent was displayed, they were educated as teachers and governesses. In a building rented for the purpose, twelve motherless children were given a simple home under the supervision of a resident matron. The daughters of the best families took turns in teaching them reading, writing, arithmetic, and needlework. The cost of feeding and clothing was met by yearly contributions and gifts. The domestics trained in this institute, of course, secured the best situations. Housewives would often apply for a graduate years beforehand, and in order to get her would try to ingratiate themselves with the matron.

In a short time little Täubchen became the favorite of the Home. Wolf Breitenbach

was right—she had a good mind, and knew how to make people like her. At the end of a year she read and wrote German with ease; mental arithmetic went faster than calculations on paper, and sewing and knitting fairly flew from under her fingers. She kept the house enlivened with constant song and laughter.

By this time she knew other songs besides the Shir ha-Ma'alos, having learned by heart the airs Rav's Mine sang to the guitar. It was amusing to hear "Father I am Calling Thee" ring from her room as she swept.

Her father came uncalled, always with a wail and a moan, complaining how he had to toil and moil, how disagreeable old Bule was, and how Wolf Breitenbach was friendly with him only in order to make him feel the more keenly that Tobias was his debtor.

Täubchen comforted him.

"Have patience for only one year still. In one year I'll be done. Several good houses are trying to get me. Then I'll look

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out for you, and you can give up your business, and pay back Wolf Breitenbach. Never mind about old Bule, be patient with her. She's mourning for her son. By the way, haven't you heard anything at all of Meyer, how the good fellow's getting along?"

Hereupon Tobias went away grumbling and growling.

The year passed. The old Rav died, and Mine drew little Täubchen still closer to herself. She even took it upon herself to choose the house in which her protégé was to serve. She selected that of Mrs. Dinchén Hornstein, the wife of the young cantor, who had sung in the chorus of the opera. A new Temple had been planned, and the younger leaders of the community were employing him to prepare the songs and train the choir. Mrs. Dinchén was a good simple soul from a town not far from Täubchen's village, and the kindly interest she had always taken in the child turned the balance

in her favor. Her husband lived only for his "great duty," their little son was not more than three years old, and the apartment on Government Square was simple and modest.

All this suited Mine very well. So, in early spring, when her course of instruction was ended, Täubchen went into the service of Mrs. Dinchen Hornstein, who treated her as though she were really a child of the family. It goes without saying that Mrs. Dinchen was old Tobias Hof's best customer, who, so far from trying to do him out of a groschen, each time offered him a drink.

It was pure joy to see Täubchen out walking with the child. She had grown and developed. Her black hair drawn back smoothly was crowned with a snow-white cap. Her roguish black eyes, even when she was silent, said "Good morning" to everybody she passed. A child's gaily colored wrap was slung over her shoulder, ready

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for lusty young Hornstein to be wrapped in when she had to carry him in her arms after he was tired out with jumping around. But as long as he ran about, she kept knitting blue woolen stockings, and the worsted colored her hands so that she needed no gloves.

"Music, music," the son of the cantor screamed one day, and pulled her by the skirt in the direction of the Guards. Music is an inheritance of the children of Israel from of old; from Jubal, whom they proclaim an inventor of musical instruments; from Miriam, who played the timbrel; and from David, who drew sweet notes from the harp. Music has struck its roots deeper into Judaism than Judaism into music.

Täubchen, too, pricked her ears at the sound of the fifes, introduced by the great Elector of Brandenburg, and was about to purse her lips to whistle the tune of the march, when her mouth gaped wide in surprise.

One guard was relieving another. And that corporal there, in command of the relievers—that tall soldier with the crisp black hair and the black mustache shading his thick upper lip, wasn't it—she stared at him—he stared at her—he wanted to give the word of command, and cried "Shema Yisroel," an order unintelligible to his company. Yes, it was Long Meyer, who had thought so often of her, of whom she had so often thought!

For them to speak with each other was impossible. But Täubchen had a telegraphic code of her own. She took the child in one arm, pointed to a house opposite, and raised two fingers to designate the number of flights. In going she turned about frequently to make sure the telegram had been deciphered and understood.

It had been understood. The very next evening Long Meyer came to pay his visit, and Mrs. Dinchen was greatly amazed to see a six-footer of a soldier falling on her

Täubchen's neck without preliminaries of any sort. Täubchen unembarrassed introduced him as a friend of her childhood and a fellow-villager.

Long Meyer gave an account of himself. As ill-luck would have it, he was put into the same company as Hans Ludwig, and Hans proceeded to make life miserable for him. Long Meyer only the more quietly and conscientiously attended to his duties; which did not fail to attract the attention of his superior officer, who kept a sharp eye upon the disturber of the peace. Long Meyer kept gaining in the favor of the captain, especially as he employed his leisure in mending his uniform. Later the captain was transferred to the capital, and he arranged to have Meyer transferred with him.

"That's why I am here!" laughed Meyer, joyously.

Täubchen laughed, too, and baby Hornstein chirped gleefully, and played with the "sojer's" cartridge pouch and scabbard.

From now on Corporal Meyer came to the house every evening, and stayed in the kitchen with Täubchen until just before taps. Undisturbed by his presence she went on with her work, while he amused the child by converting an old newspaper into a general's hat with a long plume, and letting him ride horseback on his scabbard. If perchance Mrs. Dinchen came into the kitchen and heard the two of them speaking of "at home," she sat herself down at the scoured hearth, and joined them in their talk. She knew all the inhabitants of the two villages from hearsay, but with the eminent Wolf Breitenbach she was personally acquainted, for he had visited Täubchen, and she had introduced him to her "madam" with proud satisfaction.

Mr. Hornstein did not miss his wife, for his thoughts were engrossed by his art. The melodies for the new Temple had to be written out systematically, and he worked without intermission upon fugues and coun-

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terpoint. One evening he was engaged in composing a new Lecho Dodi, for which he culled from his memory opera airs and old Jewish Psalm motifs, welding them together freely and boldly. He sat at the piano in a theatrical attitude, trying the first stanzas of the solo in his husky tenor. Meyer listened in the kitchen.

"Good God! If I had that Lecho Dodi to sing, you'd hear something."

Täubchen, who was scouring knives, displayed two dimples in her rosy cheeks.

"I know what a voice you have."

Meyer's eyes fell upon the two little round wells. Forgetting all else, he began to sing the Lecho Dodi—the tune had impressed itself upon his memory from Mr. Hornstein's first singing—in a voice that thundered through the kitchen, setting the tin lids on the walls a-rattle. Suddenly the door opened, and there stood Mr. Hornstein like a ghost, clad in a gay dressing-gown, the hair on his temples done up in curl

papers, a fashion left over from his opera days. He listened to Meyer open-mouthed. Meyer became aware of his presence, and the song stuck in his throat.

"Go on, go on!" cried Mr. Hornstein. "Young man, you have a fortune in your throat."

Meyer hemmed and hawed. He detected nothing of this fortune. Mr. Hornstein caught his hand.

"Come in," he said. "You're the very man I've been looking for. I need a tenor for the new Temple. You have the high C, and it seems you will quickly learn the songs according to the new ritual. Sing the scales for me!"

Meyer looked desperately stupid. Täubchen laughed. Her clever brain immediately took in the situation, and she realized what a future was awaiting her friend.

"Well, Meyer, where's your voice sticking?" she cried, and gave him an encouraging poke.

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"Have you no desire to follow this career?" asked Mr. Hornstein.

"I beg pardon," the soldier answered awkwardly. "I have nothing against the career, but I don't understand anything about a new rittle—and I haven't sung on the scales—and I didn't know, either, I owned a sea."

"That will all adjust itself," said Mr. Hornstein, with a superior smile, and took Meyer to his room. He struck notes on the piano, which Meyer sang with remarkable accuracy. The higher they rose, the more sonorously his voice rang out. Then Mr. Hornstein had him give an air, which he sang with the frills and flourishes natural to every Jewish throat.

The cantor now felt sure of his judgment. He told Meyer he would report the matter to the congregation, and propose him as assistant cantor with a salary of four hundred dollars a year.

"As soon as your third year of service is

ended, rent a room, and then devote your time exclusively to preparing for the position. In the interim I will give you free instruction."

Mr. Hornstein dismissed Meyer, prouder of his discovery than Columbus of having found America.

As for Meyer, drunk with joy, he fell into the arms of Täubchen, who had been listening at the door.

"Good God, what luck!" he cried over and over again. "Four hundred dollars and honor besides. I owe it to you, Täubchenleb. Now I can keep my old mother with me, and—"

Täubchen cut him off from unrolling the rest of his plans.

"See to it that you get back before taps."

He went or, rather, tumbled out. But taps had already sounded, and the corporal had to pay for his Lecho Dodi with twenty-four hours' confinement.

When Tobias Hof visited his daughter

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the next Friday, she immediately began to speak to him of Meyer. He pulled a long face.

"I don't know what you've always got to do with Long Meyer," he growled. "What's in that soldier?"

But when he heard of Meyer's appointment, and Täubchen mentioned four hundred dollars salary, the scowl changed to a broad smile.

"You don't say so, Täubchen!"

He cast a look at her, and for the first time observed that the child had blossomed into womanhood. Now he felt she was not to be blamed for interesting herself in a man with four hundred dollars salary.

Weeks passed. The third year of military service came to an end. Meyer left the army, and rented a small room. He received daily instruction from Mr. Hornstein, and daily he saw his Täubchen. It was she who brought him the written contract for his appointment as assistant cantor.

As soon as the Temple was opened, he was to enter upon his duties.

On the same day that Täubchen showed him the contract, but before she herself had yet received it from Mr. Hornstein, Wolf Breitenbach paid her a visit.

"I must see how my little Täubchen is getting along," he said, and unrolled some black silk from a piece of paper. When he handed it to her, smiling affably, Täubchen saw it was an apron.

"That wasn't necessary," said Täubchen, blushing. "It's honor enough and pleasure enough if a man like Wolf Breitenbach comes to see me."

She went to the cupboard, and poured out a glass of whiskey.

"How much do I owe you for it?" he asked, thrusting his hand into his trousers' pocket and clinking his money. "You know Wolf Breitenbach doesn't do things by halves."

Täubchen drew back offended.

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"It doesn't belong to my people. I bought it myself to serve my guests. You wouldn't shame me by offering me money for it?"

"God forbid!" he said, and pinched her reddened cheeks. "I wish you only good. I've always liked you, and it was only for your sake that I helped your father—I should like to know what Tobias Hof was to me."

"Thank you," replied Täubchen, inwardly hurt. Wolf inspired her with an uncanny feeling, and when he wanted to sit down beside her on the bench, she rose quickly, saying:

"Excuse me, Reb Wolf, the child's crying."

She ran into the next room, and Wolf Breitenbach sent a lustful glance after her out of his little gray eyes.

At the Frankfort Gate he met Tobias, who had sold his geese, and was carrying his knapsack lightly over his shoulder.

"Glad to see you!" cried out Wolf.
"Aren't we going the same way?"

Tobias muttered something. He feared a reminder of his old debt.

"Wretched business!" he snarled. "Not a heller profit! You've got to say, 'Good riddance to bad rubbidge,' and be glad you don't have to carry the geese home again."

Wolf said nothing in reply. They walked along together to "The Last Heller."

"Shan't we take a little something?"

"I haven't money to burn," Tobias answered craftily, smelling a trap.

"You'll take a drop with me, or a cup of coffee. Wolf Breitenbach doesn't do things by halves."

Tobias looked at him in astonishment. They took seats under the nut-tree, and Wolf ordered coffee and bread and butter. It was a mild day in autumn; a gentle breeze was wheedling the dry leaves from the branches.

"Tobias," began Wolf, "I visited your

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Täubchen to-day. A good child, a fine child, I tell you—"

"Thank God she is," Tobias rejoined. "Only she doesn't earn what she should. I have nothing against the people, but they haven't anything to give away themselves. So even though Täubchen is very anxious to pay you, I can't return all I owe you."

"Have I asked you to?" said Wolf, filling up a second cup for his guest. "On the contrary, Tobias, I have a proposition to make to you—give me your Täubchen, and you're not in debt to me."

Tobias laughed till the short pipe fell from his lips.

"You're trying to make a fool of me. You want my Täubchen for a wife? So help me God! Stuff and nonsense! You're three times as old as my Täubchen."

Tobias spoke vehemently.

"Well, and if I am?" screamed Wolf. "Isn't an old horse worth more than a young dog?"

"But a young horse is worth still more."

"I seem to be worth a good deal, since what I have, is good enough to lend to others without interest."

Tobias turned yellow.

"You needn't be taunting me, Rebbe Wolf, if that's all you're after."

"I wasn't after taunting you. I was in earnest."

"I couldn't imagine it," said Tobias, more quietly. "Well, if you want, I'll speak to Täubchen."

"Not a bit of it!" screamed Wolf, jumping up purple in the face. "I won't have myself offered like one of your geese! I thought you'd jump out of your skin for joy, if Wolf Breitenbach wanted to become your son-in-law. But if you think you're doing me a favor—there, not a word! Wolf Breitenbach doesn't do things by halves."

He threw the money for the reckoning on the table, and left. Tobias crossed over to the other side of the street, and went his

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way whistling. "That's it, is it?" He said to himself. "That is why he lent me money, the hound! Great God! Help me get rid of him. As it is, it is killing me that I must be beholden to him."⁴

From that day on relations between the two neighbors were strained. They did not address, nor even greet, each other.

On his next visit Tobias told his daughter of Wolf Breitenbach's suit.

"He was making fun of you," she said, forcing herself to laugh.

"That's what I thought, too. But he was in earnest, and now he's angry. I wouldn't care a snap—I can live without Wolf Breitenbach—if I'd only paid him!"

Taübchen maintained an embarrassed silence. She did not care to confess that she had lent her earnings to Meyer to pay for the rent of a room.

"At Purim I'll get two dollars from the madam. You can give them to him, papa."

Tobias reached his home thoroughly out

of sorts. Old Bule was sickly, and snarled at him. But she delivered him a letter brought the day before, and when Tobias began to read it, the folds in his old face gradually smoothed themselves out.

The letter written in Hebrew characters was from the rabbi in Hersfeld telling Tobias that a childless cousin of his, who had a house and business there, had been taken ill and desired to see one of his relatives. A five dollar bill for travelling expenses was enclosed.

Tobias quickly stuck the bill and his Tefillin in his pocket, deciding to start on the trip without delay. Hersfeld was fifteen miles away. He could go and return on foot before the night, and so save the five dollars. He did not even stop to drink his warm potato soup, but took a piece of sausage and bread to eat on the way.

The news of his cousin's mortal illness came to him like a piece of good fortune sent directly from Heaven. What did he

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care for Shmul Chayim, who had never done a thing for his relative? But the fact that Shmul Chayim thought of him in the hour of death, summoned him of all his kith and kin to his bedside, was an unmistakable sign that he had selected Tobias to be his sole heir. A house in Hersfeld and a business! He would sell both. Why should he live in Hersfeld where no one knew him? No, convert everything into cash, and ride home with two potato sacks full of dollars, throw Wolf Breitenbach's money at his feet, and laugh at him to his face. For now he hated Wolf Breitenbach above every one else, fiercely and intensely, and it was exactly in Wolf Breitenbach's presence that he had to put a curb upon his glib tongue.

He strode along with winged heels, munching his sausage. He did not even feel alarm at having to pass at nightfall through the woods where the stream had made a passage for itself through a gorge in the basalt rocks. He murmured his evening

prayer, and concluded it with the pious wish that his cousin Shmul Chayim might happily enter Gan-Eden.

Now he saw the lights of Hersfeld glimmering. The bell in the church tower struck eight o'clock. He inquired for the house of his cousin, and took in its situation and appearance with a feeling of satisfaction.

An old maid-servant received him with the information that the sick man was feeling very badly, and might not see anyone so late at night. She showed him to his room, and brought him a cup of weak coffee. Tobias, weary and exhausted, threw himself on the bed, but excitement kept him from so much as closing his eyes.

Morning dawned. A heavy fog was drifting down from an overcast sky, and the atmosphere, despite the earliness of the hour, was as oppressive as on a muggy summer day. Tobias expressed the desire to see the sick man. The old woman brought the good news that Shmul Chayim had had

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a very good night, had slept some, and felt considerably refreshed.

"Thank God!" said Tobias, and made a wry face.

He stepped into the sick-room, and his cousin stretched out his hand to him—the patient did not look so very ill.

"Pardon me, Tobias," he said, "for having brought you over here. Such an apoplectic attack always precedes death, and I wanted to have one of my family with me, so I had some one write to you without Ricke's knowledge.

"Why, it isn't anything so dreadful," said Tobias, genuinely distressed.

"Yes, it's wonderful how God came to my aid. Had I known it, I should have spared you the trouble. But if I get over this spell, I won't forget your kindness."

He wanted to say some more, about Tobias's remaining and making himself comfortable, but old Ricke entered, mumbling that the doctor's orders were that no one

should speak long with the sick man, because he would hurt himself, and she would once more have to go through all that fright and bother. So she grumblingly put Tobias out of the room. Before the door the fat country doctor confirmed her orders.

"In fact," he said, "you can return home quite at ease in your mind. The patient is entirely out of danger."

Tobias stood alone in the vestibule, and murmured to himself:

"Well, in the circumstances I'd best see to it that I get home before Shabbes!"

Mortified, embittered, and deceived of his hopes, he stood before the house which the night before had seemed so alluring. The fog had gathered into heavy, threatening clouds. Should he walk home on foot—fifteen miles? Or should he wait for the post-cart which would take him near his village? That would consume the greater part of what remained to him of his fancied wealth. He touched the five dollar bill with

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his fingers, and determined to go on foot. At the same time he wished his cousin and Wolf Breitenbach were in hell.

A warm wind had arisen, and sent the dust whirling. The ash-trees along the road bent and shook, and the bunches of red berries flew through the dust. It was impossible to see where he was stepping.

"And fifteen miles! For God's sake! A storm can come along and kill me. Then Wolf Breitenbach will surely rejoice."

At that moment he heard the rattle of a small vehicle. It was the cart carrying the mail. In those days the mail was still transported in a two-wheeled wagon drawn by an old hack. Behind the mail box was a space for hay and a sack of oats.

"Stop! Postillion!" shouted Tobias. "What must I pay to sit behind as far as Hof?"

"Well, a thaler will just about be right considering the dust and the weather."

"Are you crazy, Fritz?" cried Tobias.

"I'll give you half a thaler, and not another heller."

"Do you know, Ike," rejoined the driver, "you and I didn't use to herd pigs together for you to be calling me 'Fritz.' And if you don't want to give up a dollar, peg away on foot! Get up!"

He spurred the horse on with the whip, and a powerful blast hid the wagon in dust.

"Stop," cried Tobias. "Wait a moment, Mr. Postillion! I'll give you the dollar, and take it in God's name!"

He climbed over the wheel with difficulty, and threw himself in despair on the straw behind the mail box. Creaking and wheezing the cart jolted along through dust and storm.

After a while Tobias calmed down somewhat, and not yet having said his morning prayers, he drew out the Tefillin, laid them about his head and arm, and began to pray in a subdued sing-song.

"That's right, Jew. Just pray your Jew-

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ish 'Our Father'. If the storm overtakes us in the gorge, we may not get off with our lives!"

Tobias swayed to and fro still more violently, and put even greater ardor into his prayers.

The clouds had rolled into black masses. One of those storms was approaching which rage most furiously at the time of the equinoxes. The landscape was obscured by darkness, the wind howled and bent the trees across the road. One old poplar fell with a crash right in front of the wagon, and the horse shied. Not a drop of blood remained in Tobias Hof's face. Now a rain of hailstones rattled on their heads. The driver drew his coat over his head with a curse, while Tobias crawled deeper under the straw, his heart beating in unison with the joggling floor of the cart.

In the gorge it was black as night. The stream swollen by the downpour roared weirdly, the lightning flashed, the peals of

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thunder echoed and re-echoed among the walls of granite.

"Mr. Postillion," whispered Tobias, quaking and quivering, "are we across?"

"If the bridge is torn away," the driver growled from behind his coat collar, "we must go through the water! Damn it! Why did I load myself with a Jew?"

Tobias felt his death hour had come. He began to mumble the confession of sins, and at the naming of each sin he gave himself a desperate whack on his breast. Standing face to face with death, he became honest with himself. He searched his conscience, and asked himself whether he had really been guilty of this or that sin. When he came to "dealing unrighteously in trade and traffic," his unnaturally inflated geese stared at him reproachfully, and when he had to confess to "arrogance, obstinacy, and hatred of his neighbor," Wolf Breitenbach stood before his soul, the man he most hated, the man who had aided him, the man who

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wanted his poor child as a wife, his poor child, who might that very day become a helpless orphan. He dealt his breast even mightier blows, and sincerely begged his old friend to pardon him.

"If I get out of this alive—" he cried aloud.

"The devil take it!" the driver bawled. "For sure, it's gone and ripped the bridge away. Now we've got to get the cart through the water!"

The flood raged hideously.

Tobias in an agony of fear half raised himself and clung with both hands to the side of the cart.

"God Almighty!" he gasped. "If I get out of this alive, I swear, I swear, I'll give Wolf Breitenbach my child, I myself will offer her to him, and I will beg his pardon."

With eyes starting from their sockets he awaited the effect of his oath. He had done the one thing he could do. Like the be-

trothed in the Temple, he had offered the Lord a dove (Täubchen=Dove).

The cart swayed hither and thither as it creaked through the stream. Now it reached the bank—the gorge opened out, and there lay a streak of blue heaven over the plain of Hof and Breitenbach.

The driver threw his coat collar back.

“You ought to thank the Lord, Jew,” he said.

Without retorting, Tobias gave him the dollar, having taken the precaution to change the bill at the station. He reached home before the Sabbath.

The next morning he entered the prayer meeting room with solemn mien. He stepped up to Wolf Breitenbach, and said to the astonished man:

“Have me called up to the Torah, Rebbe Wolf. I want to bensch gomel. But first I want to beg your pardon a thousand times if I ever insulted you.”

Wolf Breitenbach experienced complete

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satisfaction in this public apology. Humility, remarkable to say, is counted a cardinal virtue by the Jews, because the Bible calls the lawgiver Moses "very meek."

When Tobias was called up to the reading of the law, and had pronounced the blessing upon the Torah, he added in a loud voice the prayer for rescue from danger, and to the amazement of the congregation concluded with the words of the Psalm: "I will pay my vows unto the Lord, yea, in the presence of all his people."

After the service everybody crowded curiously about the rescued man. But he evaded the interrogators, and begged Wolf Breitenbach for a private interview.

"Reb Wolf," he began most solemnly, "you sued for my Täubchen. I give her to you, if you still want her."

"If I still want her?" Wolf's eyes flashed. "But tell me, Reb Tobias—"

"Ask me nothing," Tobias interrupted him. "I've been ungrateful to you, and I

swore I'd make it all good again. Now a stone has been lifted from my heart, because we're good friends again."

Wolf, deeply touched, gave Tobias his hand.

"It made me feel very bad," he said, "that I had to be angry with an old friend. I meant well. So everything's all right again, and after Succos we can have the wedding."

He invited Tobias to the Sabbath meal, and the whole village of Hof rejoiced over the betrothal.

Free from misgivings, Täubchen continued to work and to laugh. Sometimes she listened at the door of the music room in order to rejoice in the musical progress of her friend. The higher Meyer climbed on the scale, the wider gaped her mouth and eyes, and when the famous high C was reached, she clapped her hands over her head in delight.

Meyer had sent for civilian's clothes from

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his mother's store, and himself adjusted them to his needs in the intervals between lessons. As his military career had left him a somewhat stalwart and dignified carriage in contrast with his former slovenly bearing, he was now really a quite acceptable young man.

In a few months, Täubchen told herself, his voice would ring from the choir, and four hundred dollars a year would ring in his pockets.

Täubchen was just revolving these things in her mind, and with her hair-pin had pulled the lamp-wick higher in its socket, in order to let the light shine the more brightly on her happy prospects, when she was surprised by a visit from her father at this most untimely hour.

There was something solemn in Tobias Hof's manner when he seated himself at the hearth, and gave an account of his journey, summoning all the shiverings and shudderings of his lively fancy to show her how

he, a second Robinson Crusoe, had escaped shipwreck only through a miracle.

Täubchen listened with childlike sympathy, and expressed sincere regret at cousin Shmul Chayim's illness. Thinking the narrative had come to an end, she wanted to resume her work in the kitchen; but Tobias arose, and announced with all paternal authority:

"Täubchen, my child, you will give your madam notice and quit her service. Just tell her right away, so she can look for someone else."

Täubchen stared at him.

"Do you know why?" he continued. "I told Wolf Breitenbach that if he really wants you, I'll give you to him. He wants you, and the wedding is to take place after Succos."

"Papa, are you crazy?" cried Täubchen, and forced herself to laugh. "Wolf Breitenbach is old enough to be my grandfather. You're making fun of me, aren't you?"

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"Child," replied the old man, "so God help me, I am serious. You know when he asked me for you, at that time I said 'No' right off, and was angry with him. But when I was in such awful danger, it occurred to me how wrong I was, and I swore I'd give you to him. And you know, child, if a pious man undertakes to do something, he must keep his word."

Täubchen stood there as if struck by lightning. Every drop of blood left her face, and her heart hammered and hammered until she could scarcely breathe.

"Be sensible, my child," Tobias continued, "and think it over. I have nothing, you have nothing, and Wolf Breitenbach is a made man. Imagine he's young! What difference does it make to you? He's fond of you, and you must get used to him, because the salvation of my soul depends upon my doing what I swore I should. You're a good child, you won't stand in the way of your father's salvation."

Täubchen burst into convulsive sobs. Her whole body was shaken, and she sank on the hearth, hiding her eyes in her hands.

Meyer, who was in the next room, must have heard the sobbing, for he came running in. When Täubchen saw him, she forgot her father's presence, and threw herself on Meyer's breast, putting her arms about his neck.

"Meyer, Meyer," she cried, continuing to sob, "I am to marry Wolf Breitenbach—my father swore I should."

Meyer held his hand protectingly over the trembling girl's head.

"What have you to mix in for?" Tobias burst out in irritation.

But Meyer first of all sought to soothe the girl.

"Be quiet. Your father loves you, and won't force you against your will. If he was too quick in making an oath, he can be absolved in the presence of three witnesses. I understand so much of the law myself."

"You understand nothing!" screamed Tobias. "Is it being too quick, if you have to wade through a river with the water up to your ears, and the thunder and lightning are as at the flood? Before the Torah I thanked God Almighty for having saved me, and before the Torah I swore I'd give Wolf Breitenbach my child. And now you're trying to keep her, when you yourself want to pray at the altar to God Almighty. You ought to be ashamed of yourself!" He turned to Täubchen. "You've always been a good child, a pious child,"—he put all the feeling he possessed into his voice. Consider, I'm an old man, and to-morrow I may die. How could I step before God and your mother, peace be with her, with such a sin upon my soul? Isn't it so, Täubchen, you understand, you see what it means—and when Wolf Breitenbach comes, you'll know what you have to do?"

Täubchen nodded mutely, and the old man left, reassured.

Meyer wanted to remain, but Täubchen waved to him to go. She went mechanically about the kitchen work still undone, looked after the child to see if it was sleeping quietly, then threw herself on her bed without undressing, and pressed the pillow over her head. Feverish visions passed before her eyes. She saw Meyer standing next to her in bridegroom's attire, with the silver marriage girdle about him. His long face smiled at her kindly. But still smiling it grew broader and broader, his whole figure swelled, and the girdle turned into the old leather money-belt that Wolf Breitenbach wore around his body, and the gray eyes of the corpulent old man blinked at her lustfully. She drew the pillow still closer about her eyes. But now she clearly heard the melody of the new Lecho Dodi, and in between the voice of her father shrieking:

"Don't keep me from Gan-Eden! Don't keep me from Gan-Eden!"

Next morning, when Mrs. Dinchen found

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no one in the kitchen, she stepped into Täubchen's room, and discovered the girl lying there agitated and feverish.

"What's the matter?" she asked.

Täubchen only shook her head, and said:

"I'm going to get up and work."

"No, no, you mustn't," said the good woman. "You must stay in bed, and drink camomile tea, else you might get a fever in earnest. I'll look after the kitchen myself to-day, and I'll take the child to Rav's Mine to play there a few hours.

Täubchen obeyed. All her limbs seemed to be broken. She fell asleep. A little before noon Wolf Breitenbach came to the apartment, freshly shaved and adorned with a silver watch-chain and seal draped across his broad abdomen.

"Täubchen is sick," Mrs. Hornstein announced when he inquired for the girl. "I hope not seriously. Her father was here last night, and the poor child must have suffered some great distress."

Mr. Breitenbach departed with a very long face.

Toward evening Täubchen arose from bed. The mention of Rav's Mine's name in the morning had awakened a dim thought in the girl's soul, which now brightened into a fixed resolve. She asked for permission to get a whiff of fresh air, saying it would instantly make her better. She put a knitted scarf about her head, and left. This was the right way, she assured herself, Mine was the one person with whom she could take counsel.

Though Mine since the death of the old Rav lived a more retired life than ever, she maintained faithful and active interest in her protégé.

"She's a noble girl, a fine Jewess, a pious soul!" Täubchen said to herself. "I'll tell her everything in my heart, and whatever advice she gives me, God knows I'll follow it."

For an hour she sat with her old friend

pouring out her whole heart. Nor did she conceal how much she liked Long Meyer, though her cheeks burned still redder at the confession. When she repeated her father's last words, and his allusion to the hour of his death, she burst into tears.

"I'm not a bad child!" she cried repeatedly, and threw herself on the breast of her friend, who was deeply touched.

"My little Täubchen," said Mine, caressingly, "how glad I should be if I could help you. If my good father were alive, he could tell us about such a solemn oath, and how to be absolved from it. But you know we have no Rav now, and those rabbis who come in from the country stick to the dead letter of the law. They don't concern themselves with the live feelings of the heart. But my own simple understanding shows me a way out. If your father were to go to Mr. Breitenbach—or you yourself—and ask him to give you up of his own accord, and absolve—"

"My father will never do it, never! He's too proud. And may I humble my father before Wolf Breitenbach? Can you advise me to?"

"No, my dear good little Täubchen,"—Mine kissed her—"it is better to suffer than to give pain. But tell me something—do you really hate Wolf Breitenbach so very much?"

"God forbid," said Täubchen, then dropped her lids. "If only I didn't like Meyer so much!"

Her voice sank to a whisper, and she blushed.

"Did you promise yourself to Meyer?" Täubchen shook her head.

"We never spoke of anything like that, but I know how much he likes me."

Tears gathered in Mine's eyes.

"My good child, you're not the only one who cannot attain the dream of her heart. Don't you know we women are born to renounce? There is some blessedness, too, in

fulfilling this duty. Do you know the story of Jephthah's daughter?"

"No."

"Her father, while engaged in a war, swore he would sacrifice the first thing that came to meet him if he returned victorious. His daughter came, his one child. She did not murmur at her fate, but willingly gave herself up as a sacrifice. Who would have known of her if she had been happy? Her sacrifice sanctified her, and after the lapse of thousands of years tears are still shed in her behalf."

"What was her name?" asked Täubchen, smiling behind her tears.

"Her name is not known—only her obedience."

"And did she make her father happy?"

"At least she wanted to. Who may ask whether such oaths are pleasing to the Lord? The story is told in the Scriptures."

Täubchen arose with the sensation that she had grown a head taller.

"Thank you, dear Miss Mine. I knew I should find comfort with you. And, please, don't be angry with me." Mine kissed her, and Täubchen went home feeling eased.

She spoke long and urgently with Meyer. The good fellow gave in to all her projects. She told her father to transmit her excuses to Wolf Breitenbach for not having been able to receive him, and tell him that she herself would come to him before the holidays. Of Mrs. Dinchen she requested two days' leave, on the plea that she had an important family affair to settle.

One mild autumn morning she passed through the Frankfort Gate, a white knitted shawl about her shoulders, a black trimmed hood on her head, and a large red umbrella in her hand. At the toll-gate Meyer stood waiting. Täubchen was not surprised, though not a word had been said in regard to an appointment.

"I won't let you go alone," he said, falling in with her pace.

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"Do you suppose Hans Ludwig will meet me?" said she, smiling.

"Heaven knows where that ruffian is now," he answered, forcing himself to smile also.

They marched on, Täubchen taking long strides to keep step.

"Do you think of that time still? It was the first time I saw you had courage."

Meyer sighed, and said dolefully:

"What's the use of courage, if you haven't the power to do anything?"

Täubchen did not answer. For an hour they walked on in silence. As they passed an apple-tree, which stretched its heavily laden branches across a fence into the road, a ripe apple fell at their feet. Meyer picked it up.

"I owe you an apple ever since that time."

"You must take a bite first."

He shook his head, and stuck the apple in his pocket. They reached the pasture outside their village. A flock of geese cack-

ling in the dry grass whirred apart at their approach. Täubchen tried to lure them to her.

“Shall we sing the Shir ha-Ma’alos?”

“I don’t feel like singing,” answered Meyer.

He stood still, and the geese quieted down. Täubchen stepped up to him, and saw his eyes were full of tears.

“When I think of that time—,” he said.

Täubchen laid her hand on his shoulder.

“But we’ll remain good friends, won’t we, Meyer?” she besought him with her dark eyes.

“As long as God gives us life.” And the tears rolled down his cheeks.

Täubchen’s eyes grew moist.

“Please, please, Meyer dear, don’t make my heart heavy. You promised me, and what I’m about to do isn’t so easy for me, anyhow.”

“You’re right, Täubchen, my love.”

They continued on their way, and when

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they reached the village, Täubchen paused and said:

"You go home to your mother, Meyer, and tell papa I'm coming soon. I'm going first to my—to Wolf Breitenbach to tell him I'm here."

Meyer held out his hand to her, and walked on without turning around.

At the door of Wolf Breitenbach's house Täubchen paused to fetch breath. She buttoned about her neck the ribbons of her hood, which lay on her little round head like a wreath, leaned the umbrella in a corner of the vestibule, and knocked softly on the door to the room.

"Come in," called an oily voice.

Wolf Breitenbach sat in the twilight in front of an old wooden table, sorting copper and silver coins, which he laid in two wooden bowls. At the sight of Täubchen, he straightened up his heavy body in surprise.

"Well, well, Täubchen, I'm glad to see you. Where do you come from?"

"From the city," she said without looking at him. "I wanted to tell you myself that I'm feeling entirely well again."

"I see it—*unbeschrieen!*" he cried, surveying the rosy face complacently. The autumn air had blown its fresh breath on her cheeks, and covered them with a bloom as on a ripe plum.

"What was the matter with you, at any rate?"

"O nothing. I needn't have stayed in bed. My madam made too much of my sickness. She shouldn't have frightened you and my father. And so—I haven't seen you since—so I came to tell you that I am willing to do what my father arranged with you."

"Did your father force you?" Wolf asked quickly, with a searching look.

She raised her large eyes to his.

"I wouldn't allow myself to be forced. I do only what my heart tells me to do."

Breitenbach shook his head.

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"I don't believe it, Täubchen. I'm not such an old fool as that. Tell me truly, Täubchen, I disgust you, don't I?"

"God forbid!" Täubchen exclaimed heartily. "I know what you've always done for us, and I've always liked you. You came right after my father. When I said the Shema Yisroel before going to sleep, I always added: 'Dear God, keep my father from getting sick and Wolf Breitenbach and—'"

She stopped, and the blood mounted to her face.

"Is that true, Täubchen love?" cried Wolf, evidently touched.

"Why shouldn't it be true?" she kept on open-heartedly. "Only it surprised me so tremendously that you wanted me. It seemed to me like marrying my own father."

She smiled. And Wolf Breitenbach was silent, taken aback.

"So," he said after a pause, "that was it? And nothing else?"

Täubchen drew a deep breath.

"There is something else. That's the reason I came to—to speak to you as I speak to myself. Because I can't go under the Chuppe with you without telling you—I mean it would be a great sin." She continued hesitatingly: "You know Long Meyer, Bule's son, has always been a good friend of mine, and while he was a soldier in the city he always came to us, and learned to sing from my Mr. Hornstein. He can sing so well that they've made him cantor in the new Temple. And I've gotten so used to him I must think of him all the time. If I become your wife, you can rest assured I'll be good and true. I'll take care of you in your old age the way your wife, peace be with her, took care of you when you were young. I'll promise you, too, if you want, never to see Meyer, and never to speak to him. But I can't promise you I won't think of him, because that goes beyond my strength."

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Tears choked her voice.

"There," she said, and wiped her eyes, "a stone has been lifted from my heart. If you want to now, the marriage can take place."

Wolf had listened to her attentively. Something was evidently stirring in his breast.

"You're a good girl," he said in a voice betraying emotion. "So God help me, you're a wonderful girl."

"Why wonderful?" rejoined Täubchen, smiling in spite of her tears.

"I see now!" cried Wolf flaring up and speaking more and more violently to hide his real feelings, "I see! You're just sacrificing yourself because your father swore an oath. Who told him to?"

"His grateful heart, and he's not killing me the way Jephthah killed his daughter. Why, he's giving me to a fine man!"

At this Wolf Breitenbach was completely disconcerted. The allusion to Jephthah's

daughter struck home, and he turned a purplish red.

"So," he shrieked, "so he's giving you to me the way a lamb is led to slaughter. And why? Because the water came up to his ears! Otherwise it wouldn't have been an honor for him to have Wolf Breitenbach for a son-in-law. O, I know Tobias Hof. I know him, every inch of him."

"No, you don't know him," cried Täubchen, taking her father's part with filial warmth. "He knows about me, but he also knows what he owes you, and what he owes God Almighty. And he doesn't want to be absolved from his oath—which he could be—because he thinks he would lose the salvation of his soul if he were to wound his old friend and benefactor."

Breitenbach drew himself up to his full height, and summoned all his pride. Tobias Hof wanted to eclipse him in magnanimity, and put him to shame!

"Very well," he said quietly. "He swore

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he'd give you to me, and I take you." He cast a look at Täubchen. She met his glance firmly and calmly. He shoved the bowls of money into the drawer, locked it, and reached for his cap.

"Come," he said curtly.

"Where to?"

"To your father. We must tell him everything's settled."

They walked through the long village without speaking. On nearing Tobias Hof's hut the sound of a man's clear voice rang powerfully through the darkening night.

"What's that?"

Täubchen smiled.

"That's Meyer's voice. He's singing the new Lecho Dodi to his mother."

Now they could distinctly hear the words:

"Come, O friend, to welcome the bride."

Wolf Breitenbach smiled also, and growled,

"Remarkable!"

The voice broke off at the sound of the

knocking. When the new-comers entered, Meyer arose in embarrassment, and wanted to slip away. Old Bule crouched at the hearth coughing.

"Welcome, Reb Wolf," cried Tobias, rising. He wanted to kiss Täubchen, but Wolf stretched out his arm in front of her, and said:

"What do you want? She belongs to me. Everything's settled!"

For a moment he gloated over everybody's stupefaction.

"Isn't it so? You swore, Reb Tobias, you swore you'd give me your child, and I take her!"

He raised his voice.

"And you are free of your oath, isn't it so?"

Tobias nodded in assent.

"But now that she belongs to me, I can do with her what I want, can't I? Then I'll give her to this long—this long cantor here! Why are you holding your mouth open?"

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he laughed, seeing Meyer staring at him stupidly. "Don't you want her because she has nothing? I give my child five hundred dollars on the spot, and when I die she'll get the rest. Wolf Breitenbach doesn't do things by halves."

He planted himself squarely in the full consciousness of his nobility. But realizing that all were looking at him as if he were merely joking, he took Täubchen and laid her on the breast of her lover, who seemed to be intoxicated.

"I call God to witness that what I say is Toras Moshe!"

The general tension was relaxed. Everybody talked and sobbed and laughed and embraced. Even Tobias forgave the magnanimity of his friend, and emitted sibilant sounds of admiration.

Meyer tried to stammer his thanks. Wolf interrupted with a laugh,

"Cantor, sing what you have to say to me."

Meyer utterly bewildered took him at his word, and began to sing:

"Come, O friend, to welcome the bride."

The walls of the little room shook with the thunderous tones, as once the walls of Jericho.

Täubchen laughed for joy, while the tears streamed down her cheeks.

"Has a stone been lifted from your heart?" Wolf asked her in an aside. And she answered:

"From to-day on I'll pray for you first, then for my father, then for him."

Late in the autumn the new Temple was dedicated, and the new cantor, Mr. Bettenhausen, gave general satisfaction at his first appearance. Soon after, the wedding was celebrated, the first in the new Temple. Mrs. Dinchen led Täubchen to the altar, because old Bule lay sick in bed. She had bestowed the luxury of an open hansom upon the bridal couple, and while they were driving through the streets, they noticed a

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dirty, drunken lout, loading beer barrels on a wagon in front of the "Stockholm." He looked up to admire the spruce couple. Did he recognize them? It was Hans Ludwig.

Täubchen invited her old father to live with her and Meyer, because Mrs. Bule, deeply mourned by her son, passed away soon after the wedding. He refused. He did not want to be a burden upon his children. But when a year later his cousin Shmul Chayim actually died, and bequeathed him a tidy sum, he felt justified in moving to the city. There he lives with his children, and whittles Trenderl for his round-cheeked grandchildren.

RASCHELCHEN

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When Raschelchen scurried through the streets, hugging the walls of the houses, and suddenly disappeared inside some vestibule, the people who passed by shuddered, and threw a melancholy glance at the house she had entered. They knew that a girl in the bloom of youth, or a happy mother, or a worthy old woman lay upon her deathbed. For death was the one event that drew Raschelchen from her room in the village near the cemetery. She came forth only to recite the prayers for the dead and wash and dress the bodies. She was known in the community as the "bird of death," announcing the end as the petrel announces the storm. She seemed to place upon the house doors the mysterious token by which the angel of death might know where to enter.

Raschelchen was an old woman of seventy; at least, so she appeared. Her figure was small and bent. A black band, according to the Jewish custom, carefully held in the hair over her pale, furrowed countenance, and a linen cap trimmed with faded yellow ribbons was her only head-covering even in winter. Her shrivelled hand clasped an old silk shawl over her breast, its color showing tones of green, yellow, and gray. A constant nodding of her head gave her the appearance of speaking to herself. She looked at nobody and greeted nobody, as if aware that her salutation was taken as an ill-omen. Yet her glance had nothing of that piercing quality commonly ascribed to an *Ayin hora*. Her eyes were as though covered with a gray veil, a veil woven of tears.

I noticed that Raschelchen when gliding past the walls of the houses on her way to the dying carried flowers carefully hidden under her shawl. Once, though it was in

the winter time, I saw her steal furtively into the hothouse and buy some pale tea-roses. She looked at them smiling and nodding, believing herself unobserved, and then hid them anxiously under her shawl. I recollected the fact that a young girl in the community had just died. Since the Jewish rite, however, forbids the adornment of the dead with flowers, and since, so far as I knew, Raschelchen had scarcely any intercourse with the living, I was at a loss to account for her act.

Soon after a strange and gruesome spectacle gave me the explanation.

Death had again bereft Joel Reinach, the long-suffering, of one of his beautiful daughters. As I was among the privileged few invited on the great holidays to make up the Minyan in the noble old man's green-curtained room, I felt impelled to attend the funeral of his daughter, a charming girl cut off in the flower of her youth. The autumn before she had been rosy with health, and

now, at the approach of spring, she had to offer up the spring of her own days.

The Chevre Kadishe had not yet arrived, when with a heavy heart I ascended the soft-carpeted stairway. There were only a few persons in the waiting-room, standing about in silence. I withdrew to the stairway landing, and as I leaned against the balustrade, I saw the two younger daughters dressed in black walk with drooping eyes to the door of a side room. One of them laid a shy, trembling hand upon the knob, and opened the door. An oppressive odor of wax candles and frankincense assailed the nostrils, and the girls instinctively left the door ajar. In the farther end of the room, between two tall burning candles in black candlesticks, stood the open coffin covered with a pall. The girls bent down and wanted to pull off the cover in order to take a last look at the features of their beloved sister, but Raschelchen emerged from the dark depths of the room, and warded them

off, shaking her head. Words were exchanged which I could not hear. Then the old woman took a cotton thread and began to measure them from head to foot. The girls resisted, but she paid no heed to them, and like one of the *Parcæ* cut the thread over their heads with a pair of shears.

I do not know what the underlying thought of this Jewish custom is. The living are not permitted to put any token of love into the graves of the dead, such as a flower or a ring, so that the longing soul should not draw after it those who remain behind. But the measure of younger relatives is placed into the coffin, apparently as a symbol of ransom.

The girls hid their faces, and knelt at the foot of the coffin. The old woman, thinking herself unobserved, quickly put the shears to her own head, cut off a lock of her silvery white hair from under her cap, and carefully laid it beside the little rolls of the "measurements." Next she pulled back the

pall a little way, and, groping delicately with her fingers, placed the love-token under the head of the dead. This done, she bent over close to the ear of the body, and began to murmur prayers or greetings, nodding her head and raising her left hand, as if beckoning yearningly to Heaven.

The arrival of the Chevre roused her. She rose quickly, the wrinkles of her face washed by tears. The girls slipped from the room silently. There was a murmur of monotonous prayers, mingled with the dull hammer strokes on the lid of the coffin. Then the mournful procession started to leave the house. The sisters leaned their foreheads upon the window panes, and wept their last farewell into their white handkerchiefs. The old father remained locked up in his room.

I must confess, my thoughts were neither with the mourners nor with the dead girl. My mind dwelt upon the strange, uncanny old woman. The fear I had once expe-

rienced was changed into profound pity. I felt that her flowers as well as her tears were not meant for the strangers. She must have sent the lock of her silvery hair into the grave, because she had no fear of being dragged down to the realm of the shades, but rather longed with her whole being to depart to the other world.

I set about trying to find out the story of Raschelchen's life, and I shall here endeavor to recount what I learned from my mother and my old aunt Channe, who is the chronicler of the community.

During the Westphalian period, when Jerome Bonaparte resided in Wilhelmshöhe, which had to be called Napoleonshöhe, all the fashions of the Empire came in vogue in our city. Frenchmen set up brilliant shops, French tailors made the short-waisted Empire gowns, and French hair-dressers undid the German plaits, curled little locks, and bound them with ribbons *à l'impératrice*.

At that time a Jewish hair-dresser came into the community, Rachel by name. She pronounced it, of course, the French way, Raschéll, and as she was a dainty, agile little body, the German diminutive was soon appended; which gave rise to the name Raschelchen. She told everybody in the worst of French with a strong Jewish intonation: "*Je suis de Metz!*"

Mon père, she said, was cantor in the great synagogue, *mon mari*, Monsieur Piccard, was in the great army, she herself was travelling only for pleasure, and was hair-dressing only *pour passer le temps*. She was *une femme honnête* and *très religieuse!* Yet she did not wear her hair concealed after the manner of Jewish women, but puffed up in two little locks *à la Titus*; and two lively black eyes flashed from her little brown face. She ran about to all the ladies, and had much to do among the military officers and the staff of generals, and *mon mari* was her every third word.

But no one cared much for her *mari*, and no deep scrutiny was made into her antecedents, for she soon proved herself so excellent in her art that all the women and girls wanted to appear at the balls in the club house with their hair done up by Raschelchen. Barring her frequent visits to the military men, not even the sharpest tongues could find any cause for cavilling at her.

When the French period came to an end, she returned home, as she said, to visit her father; her *mari* she no longer mentioned. But she came back within a few months. She had lost her father, and had been unable to find her husband. The sprightly girl had changed into a quiet little woman. A four-year-old daughter named Reine was all she brought with her from her home.

Times had changed. Women now wore plain dresses and German plaits *à la Kurprinzess*. The fashion veered from dances and masquerade balls to sewing circles and devotional exercises.

The admission of new Jews into the community was rendered very difficult, in fact, was entirely prohibited by the police, unless they could prove they had ample means of subsistence.

Raschelchen was hard put to it, but she was backed by a successful mediator, little blond Reine, a most beautiful child. The Hebrew name Malke, in English Regina, in French Reine, was immediately translated into Reinchen (pure), and the appellation suited the rosy, limpid little creature unqualifiedly.

She looked pure and dainty as a porcelain princess, and hung upon the arm of her mother with a smile meant for the whole world. Women and girls stopped on the street to fondle her when she greeted them in the jargon of her mother. In a short time she had so entirely come to be regarded as the community's own that everybody energetically strove to find a position for Raschelchen. One was finally secured.

An attendant was needed in the women's bathhouse. The ritual bath was in the basement of the old synagogue, and in the third story of the same building was a dilapidated little room, which the community had resolved to put into repair. Here Raschelchen was installed. She fulfilled her duties conscientiously. To eke out her salary, she did a little trading in old lace, and on special occasions she tried her old art upon the shiny, greasy hair of her neighbors.

Reinchen grew up in this ruin like a rose by the side of a decayed wall, pampered by a mother's idolatrous love. Despite the mouldiness of the little room in this house resting upon weather-worn beams, despite the darkness of the narrow little street, where the sun merely grazed the gables of the roofs, the girl shone as with the light of inward sunshine. She skipped about so daintily in her golden-hued kid shoes, over the filthy, rough pavement of the street, that you might have supposed she was glid-

ing over the parquetry floor of a dancing hall. Her dress had to be spotless, and a colored ribbon always bound her hair, for the women and girls loaded her with gifts of ribbons and ornaments.

As for Raschelchen, even in the winter time she had no wrap except her silk shawl *caca dauphin*, a relic of better times brought from Metz. But she would not have it otherwise. She would have been mortified, had the presents been given her instead of her "blessed Reinchen." She regarded the child with a mother's ecstasy, and would not for the world have changed places with Mrs. Goldschmidt or Mrs. Feidel, the richest women in the community.

By the time Reinchen reached her twelfth year it was not her beauty alone that attracted general attention. She displayed remarkable musical talent. Her voice, clear as a bell, penetrated through the window of the damp room, and reached the street like the warbling of a canary bird. She

needed to hear a melody but once to be able to repeat it. Passers-by looked up and stopped to hear "the child" sing.

"Wait, I'll give you something," said the stout woman who peddled second-hand wares in the dilapidated vestibule of the synagogue.

After rummaging through her old frippery, she pulled out a cracked violin, and handed it to the child.

Reinchen polished both the violin and the bow until they shone neat as a row of new pins, then asked her mother to buy her strings. Though she had never before had such an instrument in her hand, she adjusted and tuned the strings with an accurate ear, and soon was able to play accompaniments to the airs she always sang.

Her mother listened in amazement, and nodded her head.

Once while Reinchen was standing by the window, her attempts upon the cracked instrument were heard by a violin player in

the orchestra of the court theatre, Christian Engelbrecht, the son of the German tailor across the street, who patched up old clothes. He beckoned to her, and offered her his instrument to play upon and himself as a teacher.

Thus Reinchen began to study under young Engelbrecht, who could not find words enough to express his admiration of the girl's rare talent. He came to her every day, slighting his other lessons, and brought along with him his own violin and notes. Reinchen learned so readily that she was soon able to read the most difficult pieces at sight.

Whole evenings at a time Raschelchen sat in the low little room lighted by a tallow dip, and ascended to Heaven on the scales and arpeggios coaxed from the violin as on a Jacob's-ladder. She nodded time with her head, shook it in amazement when the strings trilled under the rosy finger tips of her "blessed Reinchen," and murmured an

accompaniment of German, French, and Hebrew words of endearment.

Sometimes Engelbrecht would regard his gifted pupil with beaming eyes, or tap her on the shoulder with

“Bravo, bravo, Reinchen!”

Then the happy mother would cry:

“A wonderful child, isn’t it?”

Engelbrecht, it happened, gave lessons to the son of Mrs. Chaichen Büding, the best-looking and most charitable woman in the community. Once she said to him:

“Bring the girl to see me some time. If her talent is really as exceptional as you say, the Women’s Auxiliary must do something exceptional for her musical education.”

“The first thing to do would be to get her another instrument,” said Engelbrecht, and modestly added, “and another teacher. She can’t learn anything more from me. She mastered the technique in one year as if by a miracle. Now, I’m nothing more, you

might say, than a hodman at playing the violin, and I wouldn't attempt to guide such a genius in musical conception."

"I'll see to it she gets a violin," said Mrs. Büding. "What teacher would you recommend?"

"Why, aren't we fortunate enough to have the greatest master right here in our city?" cried Engelbrecht, enthusiastically. "I mean Ludwig Spohr."

Mrs. Büding reflected an instant, then took friendly leave of the young musician, and dressed herself to go to the great composer and unexcelled violinist, who a short time before had been appointed conductor of the orchestra in the court opera. His modest little house was set in a garden near by, on the Königsplatz. His wife had been a friend of Mrs. Büding for many years. She was an excellent harpist, and in addition possessed the art of toning down her famous husband's harshness and inaccessibility of manner. Through her inter-

mediation the master immediately promised to listen to the child.

When Reinchen received the violin from Mrs. Büding, though it was of little value, she danced for joy; but she started back in terror at the idea of being presented to the great master. Raschelchen pleaded to be allowed to accompany her, and the benefactress felt that the contrast between mother and daughter would be most effective in impressing the master. The tall girl clad in a white dress, with her long golden braids and long eyelashes drooping shyly before the coming good fortune, resembled an angel by Dürer, while Raschelchen presented a genuine Dutch genre picture, wrapped in her green-yellow shawl, the violin case under her arm, and her little head constantly nodding. At the entrance to the garden the little mother unexpectedly refused to go farther, despite all persuasion. She insisted on waiting hidden behind the trees until she heard the tones of the "blessed" child's violin.

When they entered, Spohr was sitting at the piano busily correcting the score of his opera "The Alchemist," which lay on the half-open lid. He arose to greet them. His figure was tall and powerful, his features noble, his brow like the brow of the Jupiter of Otricoli. The interruption in his work seemed to annoy him. Not with a single glance did he honor the girl who stood before him with a beating heart.

His wife, however, opened the piano, and with her kindly manner drew the child toward it. She took up the notes Reinchen held in her hand, and offered to accompany her. Smiling at the choice of so difficult a piece—it was a violin concerto by Spohr—she nodded to the little virtuoso to begin.

The master seated himself on the leather sofa next to Mrs. Büding, and as it was opposite the window through which the spring sun cast the flickering lights and shadows of young foliage, he put a green shade over his eyes.

Reinchen began to play. The strings quivered under her trembling fingers, all the blood left the transparent skin of her face. But she soon forgot the world about her, entirely steeped in the tones of the powerful concerto. The bow swung over the difficult passages of the allegro movement firmly and boldly.

The master listened with increasing attention, shoved the shade from his eyes, and looked at the glowing child, who had raised her soulful, inspired eyes from the notes, and seemed to be improvising the glorious tone-pictures.

The mediocre instrument wheezed painfully like a tired horse spurred on by an impatient rider. At the end of the allegro movement Spohr tore it from Reinchen's hands, and offered her his own, which lay on the piano in an open case. A shudder seemed to run through the child's frame when she took up the violin consecrated by the master's hand. Mrs. Spohr smiled affa-

bly, and struck the opening chords of the adagio movement. Reinchen seized the bow and played. The tones of an organ came from the wonderful Amati. A large tear gathered in her blond lashes, the notes gradually wavered before her, the violin slipped from her hands, and she covered her eyes with her hands; but the master had already seized her about the waist, raised her in the air, and pressed a kiss upon her forehead.

"Come as often as you want, and play for me," he cried. "God has given you what an artist needs. We will see to the rest. I thank *you*," he said to Mrs. Büding, who had thanked him with feeling. "I hate infant prodigies, but this little blond creature is no child. The tones reveal a great and mature soul."

From now on Reinchen took lessons from Spohr several times a week. The whole community spoke of it, and overwhelmed Raschelchen with congratulations. They wanted to get her a lighter and airier dwell-

ing, but she declined their offers, and Reinchen begged to be allowed to remain in the little room of the old synagogue, to which she and her mother had grown accustomed

“Mother dear, we’ll remain here, won’t we?” she cried in stormy eagerness, throwing her arms about her mother, and at the same time casting a furtive glance through the window into the narrow street.

“Certainly, my blessed child.”

Raschelchen’s fortune, far from filling her with pride, inspired her with the profoundest humility. From now on she was a model of scrupulous piety. She wore her hair carefully hidden under the black band, and accompanied every sound of her idol’s violin with blessings and recitations of the Psalms, instinctively falling in with the melodies. Reinchen had to offer a sacrifice also, by permitting the beloved violin to rest quietly in its case on the Sabbath. If anybody spoke to Raschelchen in admiration of her daughter, she repelled the com-

pliment with a shake of the head and with the *absit omen* of the German Jews, *unbeschrieen und unberufen*, as if she feared the envy of the evil powers. But a happy smile completed that of which her words had forbidden the utterance.

People wanted to listen to exhibitions of her highly extolled talent, and invited Reinchen to parties; but she refused on the plea that she still had much studying to do before she could allow herself to be heard in public. The mother was delighted with the decision. She wanted to have her daughter to herself; her sole possession on earth was to be shared with no one. When Engelbrecht tried to persuade her that Reinchen could hold her own with any performer whatsoever, she would shake her head violently.

"My Reinchen must not be applauded like other musicians. A Broche must be said over her."

And she herself made Broches in words and in looks, when, in the small lamp-lit

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room, Reinchen's violin sent forth its sounds to the accompaniment of Engelbrecht's playing on an old spinet, bought at a second-hand shop, from the ragged notes of the circulating library. Raschelchen would sit in a dark corner shaking her head and murmuring:

"God Almighty—the child—my Reinchen—my Tachshid—my *bijou*—Lo kom—Lord, the Sechie—if my father were to hear her, he'd forgive me everything—listen to those tones—it's magic—look at her face—just like him—Joseph's Chen—my Reinchen—my pearl—may God preserve thee—Omen ve-Omen!"

Her mother's text to her melodies amused Reinchen, and she sent the accompanist a furtive smile over the exclamations.

Engelbrecht was the sole witness of this quiet but happy existence. Regarding the young artist as his "discovery," he watched her progress with silent triumph.

He was a slender youth of twenty, blue-

eyed and red-cheeked. His blond hair brushed smoothly behind his ears fell over his neck, and his eyes looked amiably through a pair of rimless glasses. He gradually gave up his old associations with his Philistine family and the circles that haunted the Rathskeller, and passed every hour left free from his teaching and his duties at the theatre in the little room of the dilapidated synagogue. It was so cosy there when the sun reflected from the gable of the high house opposite shone through the clean white curtains and brought out the perfume of the two basilicum plants standing on the window-sill. And it was so pleasant to have Reinchen jump up hastily from the footstool of her mother's easy-chair, where Raschelchen was sleepily nodding, and run to meet him, holding out her fine white hands. In the evening, when the brass lamp on the white table-cloth cast its circle of light on the ceiling, the new violin would be carefully removed from its case, and the two

would begin to play. If a Beethoven sonata was to be rendered, Engelbrecht would accompany Reinchen on the spinet; if a violin duet, the two blond heads inclined toward each other in the painstaking effort to bring their instruments into accord.

Reinchen could associate with her neighbor, the child of poor parents and her colleague, in that unconstrained intimacy which in small towns makes friends of children who live on the same street. He called her Reinchen, she called him Christian, a name that would never glide easily from the tongue of Raschelchen, who consistently used the name Engelbrecht.

Imperceptibly Engelbrecht's musical abilities increased from contact with his pupil. The genius that inspired her playing flowed into him, and gave him a fresh understanding of music. Formerly he had played with the precision of a technician; now he showed the fine musical sensibility that Reinchen displayed either intuitively or as a result

of the great master's instructions. Though now and then he was able to correct the enthusiastic girl for hastening the tempo, or giving too individualistic or too disjointed a form to her phrases, Reinchen was really his teacher. They instinctively felt that they complemented each other. The tones of the two violins gracefully adapted themselves to *one* tone. Eye sunk in eye, each waiting carefully for every shading in the other's rendition, for every touch of feeling, for every rise in passion, their souls flowed into each other, and their hearts vibrated as harmoniously as the chords of their violins.

Sometimes Engelbrecht got a quartet together by bringing two of his colleagues, and the musicians and their stands quite filled the little room. Raschelchen sat on the bed at the window, her prayer-book in her hands, nodding her head admiringly in time with the music. When the first violin, played by Reinchen, accomplished the diffi-

cult passages, she would cry out in wonder, "Sst! Sst!"

Thus for months their life flowed on quietly and smoothly.

However, little clouds sometimes dimmed the sunshine. If on a Friday evening Engelbrecht opened the spinet, and began to play some favorite selection, and Reinchen behind her mother's back involuntarily reached out for her violin, Raschelchen came rushing in with an outcry:

"Reinchen, what are you doing? On the holy Sabbath!"

The girl shamefacedly put her violin away, but Engelbrecht passed some scornful remark about "ridiculous prejudices," or "the narrow-mindedness of the bigoted Jews," and Reinchen, avoiding Raschelchen's notice, slipped her hand on his shoulder and begged him with a beseeching look not to annoy her mother. Raschelchen, however, would shake her head, turn her back, and mutter, "The Goy!"

She said nothing to Reinchen against Engelbrecht, because she knew how indispensable the colleague was to her child.

At the end of Reinchen's sixteenth winter, the heart of the pious woman had to undergo a severe conflict. In Easter week a great oratorio was to be given in the garrison church, which possessed the finest organ in the city. Spohr arranged the program and conducted the orchestra. The soprano was to be Henriette Sontag. For the violinist who was to play a solo introduction to one of the prima donna's arias and accompany her singing of the aria, he chose Reinchen.

When Reinchen heard of the choice, she glowed all over, and played for her master enthusiastically, eliciting an affable tap on the shoulder. She announced the news to her mother gleefully, and spoke with Engelbrecht of the sensation it would create to have Reine Piccard's name associated with that of the world-famous singer.

Raschelchen received the news with a violent shaking of the head.

"My child play in a church! My pious father, peace be with him, would turn in his grave."

"I don't understand you!" Engelbrecht exclaimed in a temper.

"You can't," answered Raschelchen, quietly.

Reinchen took to pleading. She read the Biblical text of the oratorio with a devout expression, and when that did not succeed, began to play the melody of the aria on her violin.

"That sounds like a Nigun," said Raschelchen, amazed. She was half conquered.

Reinchen followed up the partial victory by throwing her arms about her mother's neck and stroking the prematurely gray hair.

"Well, mother dear, I may, mayn't I?"

Raschelchen nodded in spite of herself, and Reinchen jumped up rejoicing:

"I may, I may!"

She kissed the violin and her friend Christian.

The very next day the street placards announced Miss Reine Piccard next to Henriette Sontag, and the whole community congratulated Raschelchen on the extraordinary Koved.

But neither the community nor Raschelchen had consulted a Luach. Rehearsals were already in full swing when it was discovered that the concert would take place on Seder evening. Now the mother put her absolute veto upon Reinchen's participating in the concert, and insisted on her telling the master. Reinchen obeyed in tears. But Ludwig Spohr drew his Jupiter brow into a threatening frown, and exclaimed:

"Stupid stuff! I command you to play! That's all!"

Was it right for her to irritate the master to whom she owed everything? Reinchen hastened to Mrs. Büding, and told her of the difficulty.

"Don't worry, my dear," Mrs. Büding comforted her, and went with her to see Raschelchen. "You must make this sacrifice for Mr. Spohr," she said to the mother, "and, believe me, it will be a deed pleasing to the Lord. Just think, Reinchen is the first Jewish child to whom the great master has ever given the benefit of his instruction. If you got him into a pickle now by withdrawing Reinchen, you would make him very, very angry, and he would never give in to anything like it again. Then you would be answerable for it for all time to come. Besides, the honor of your child is the honor of the whole community and a Kiddush ha-Shem, and a pious woman ought not to be against it."

Raschelchen shook her head at these arguments.

"I don't know what's what any more," she said, "and the worst thing in the world is if you don't know what's right and what's wrong. My pious father, peace be with him,

could have told me, and there's no Rav here who can pasken it for me. But you're a pious woman, and know more in your little finger than I do in my head. So in God's name let Reinchen play in the church on Seder evening."

She burst into tears, which Reinchen in vain endeavored to soothe away.

"Don't cry, dear little mother, don't cry," she sobbed. "I won't do it if you forbid me to."

"But I don't forbid you to! I don't know any more what's right and what's wrong."

While Reinchen played her soulful tones in the church, admired of all, her mother sat in the women's gallery of the synagogue, her head buried in her Siddur, praying devoutly, fervently, as if to drown the sounds that rose to Heaven from her child's violin. On returning home, she spread the table with the white cloths and the browned Matzos, and waited in silence for her daughter's coming. Reinchen appeared, still glowing

with excitement, clad in a white dress and a rose in her hair. Engelbrecht escorted her, and congratulated the mother on the applause Reinchen's playing had evoked.

Raschelchen seemed scarcely to hear her.

"Let me bless you, my child," she said, and murmuring softly laid her hands on the blond head.

She did not invite Engelbrecht to remain. No "stranger" should take part in the Seder meal. She put the dishes on the table without speaking, and Reinchen sat there on the night of her first triumph with a heavy heart.

The news of Reinchen's first success was spread abroad, and every day brought in congratulations and praises and approving notices in the city papers, as well as in journals published elsewhere. But the pious mother's depression only increased, and cast ever deepening shadows on her soul. She did not suffer from scruples regarding the past, but from a mysterious foreboding of

the future. The music had come between her and her child, she began to shrink from it, fear it, as if it were some hostile force. Likewise she grew to hate the Goy Engelbrecht in the measure that he became indispensable to Reinchen.

He visited the little room more frequently than ever in order to practice, and he spoke of projects he and the girl would carry out together, of concerts and tours in foreign cities, of tremendous success and wealth. Raschelchen merely shook her head over such "Shtuss."

Reinchen, naïve and unconstrained as was her intercourse with her childhood friend, felt that a magic power was forcing her to his will, though she did not tell herself this in so many words. Every fibre of her being was wrapped about her loved music, and in Engelbrecht she found the elective affinity who understood her. The tones of her violin seemed thin and poor when not joined to his. The voices of their instruments were

the voices with which the two musicians spoke to each other. Through the tones of their art they caught each other's thoughts, each other's sorrows and joys. Reinchen knew only too well she could not live without Christian, but she did not know the name of the force that drew her to him.

Summer approached. The theatre was closed, and Ludwig Spohr went to the baths. On taking leave of Reinchen he laid his great hand lovingly on her head.

"Bravo, my child, another year and we'll be something worth the while! But spare yourself during the summer. I don't like to see you growing up so tall and thin. Besides, violin playing is hard on the chest, especially if one plays with his whole soul, as you do."

However, it was exactly in the summer time that Engelbrecht had leisure; and duets for the future tour were studied with all the more diligence. And think of it! Letters were already coming in from var-

ious baths, inviting the young artists to play at concerts and musicales. Engelbrecht's secret steps toward securing engagements were bringing in results.

He would carry the letters to Reinchen in triumph, and trembling with eagerness she would read them to her mother. Raschelchen, however, received them with a violent shaking of her head.

"Shmues periendis (*pour rien dits*). Do you suppose I'll let you go away, my Reinchen, without me?"

"Who says I will?" Reinchen cried out frightened.

"Wouldn't you be going without me?" Raschelchen rejoined vehemently. "Should I go along, and lead you around like an elephant? And supposing, God forbid, you should get sick out there among strangers? Not for the world! What do I care for your music, if it takes my Reinchen away from me—my only treasure in all this wide world!" Tears choked her. "Look at

me," she continued, "I can't tell you now, not yet, and certainly not before other people—but I'd give my five fingers if I had remained quietly at home when I was a girl, without thoughts of anything else. God will pardon me. That's why he gave you to me, my blessed child! You'll put the idea out of your head, won't you?"

Reinchen stood before her deeply moved, with drooping lids. Engelbrecht jumped up from the piano-stool, and shut the lid of the spinet with a crash.

"Nonsense!" he cried. "Jewish narrow-mindedness! Enough to disgust any sensible man! For what do you suppose your child was given such a gift? Why do you suppose such a great master taught her? Did we study together for years in order to play in this miserable little hole? Absurd! Bury such a light under a bushel! That's a sin you could never answer for!"

Reinchen paled and looked at her mother. Raschelchen merely smiled at the insults.

"He wants to teach me what a sin is!" she murmured. "And supposing I *am* a narrow-minded Jewess, who begs her child for something, for something her heart and her bitter experience tell her to ask for? Is it a sin to honor one's father and one's mother? That's a thing to be settled between ourselves, and with no third person!"

"Very well!" cried Engelbrecht, trembling so violently that his spectacles shook on his nose. "You settle it between yourselves! If you must, stay in your Judengasse. And for this I drew this talent out of the mud like a pearl, and for this I took her to the great master, and for this luxuriated for two years in Mozart, Beethoven, and Haydn with her! Great Genius," he exclaimed, throwing the notes from the stand to the floor, "forgive them, they know not what they do!"

Reinchen stooped to pick up the notes, but Engelbrecht caught her impulsively by the shoulders, and cried out:

"Never mind, never mind! You don't need them any more. And you don't need the strings of your violin. I'll tear them off!"

Reinchen wrenched the violin from his clasp, and held it to her bosom as a mother holds a whimpering child. She was like a slender sapling torn hither and thither by contrary winds.

"Not that, mother, not that, anything else, but not that!" She raised her large eyes to her mother full of pained despair.

Raschelchen clasped both hands about her knees to hide their trembling.

"What do you want of me, my child? You won't get me to take my young tender child out into the strange world. Do you want to go alone, without me, against my will? Do whatever your heart tells you to do."

"Reinchen!" Engelbrecht cried out joyously, and drew the trembling girl into the window-niche, where he began to speak to

her in whispers. She listened to him, her whole body quivering.

"What is he saying to you, what are you saying that you don't want me to hear?" Raschelchen cried, and arose from her seat.

"Nothing you mayn't hear," answered Engelbrecht. "In fact, I want you to hear it, and you must listen. Your child now stands at the parting of the ways. The gates of art either open to her now, or close against her forever. She should step through the gates holding my hand—my hand, my love, do you hear? I will accompany you through life as my playing accompanies your playing."

Reinchen regarded him with wide-open eyes. Raschelchen threw a look at him as at a madman.

"You understand me, don't you?" Engelbrecht continued with growing passion. "You have understood me all along. Since we found each other, what I told you in

music, you answered in music. Now let me tell you in words—‘I love you.’ And now you gather courage to tell me in words, ‘I love you.’ It must be decided now, this very moment. The chains that bind your heart and your genius must be broken. Break them, my love, break them as I break away from all the prejudices of the world against your nation. Be my wife. One word—yes or no. United forever or separated forever!”

The handsome youth hung his flashing glance on the eyes of the girl. She could not utter the word. She reddened up to the golden fringe on her temples; her bosom heaved as if for the first time raising its young wings. What he was saying of things she had never before heard sounded confused, like a strange language. A sweet terror held her heart and chained her tongue. Her vision did not fix itself upon her lover, nor upon her mother; it fled inward, into her own soul. A feeling of alarm took pos-

session of her, a cold shiver ran through all her limbs.

"One word! One word!" cried Engelbrecht, and caught her cold, trembling hand.

Raschelchen, who had followed his declaration in speechless astonishment, wanted to withdraw her child from contact with him. Her muscles, however, refused to obey her, and she sank back into her seat. She saw her whole past, her whole future compressed into this one moment.

"Now you see," she managed to utter painfully, "now you see what he is aiming at with his 'art.' Speak, speak as you think. The Almighty can't mean to punish me so cruelly that my child will disavow her God and her mother! I won't say a word. You give him the answer."

"Reinchen, do you love me?" exclaimed Engelbrecht, and seized both the hands of the girl standing there motionless. Her lips moved, but did not pronounce a word. He hastily caught up his hat.

"You are silent!" he cried wildly.
"Good-by, then, forever!"
"Christian!"

The anguished cry escaped Reinchen's breast as from a person drowning. She raised both arms, and the violin she had pressed to her breast slid to the floor.

Raschelchen heard the name, and sank back as if struck by lightning.

"Reinchen, my child!" she screamed shrilly in intense anguish.

At this Reinchen seemed to awake from a trance. Her stiffened limbs relaxed, and she darted like an arrow to her mother, throwing both arms about her neck. "I'll stay with you, mother dear!" she sobbed. "As long as I live I'll stay with my mother!"

Engelbrecht rushed out. The sound of his footsteps gradually died away on the rickety wooden stairway. The child lay on her mother's breast sobbing aloud. Raschelchen pressed the blond head close to her heart and whispered in her ear:

"I know what is going on inside of you, my Tachshid, my jewel! You have done what I didn't do, you have ransomed your mother's soul, and my pious father is blessing you for it." And laying her hand on her child's head she prayed with her eyes raised to heaven: "God bless thee like Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah. May the Lord bless and preserve thee, may the Lord let his countenance shine upon thee and be merciful to thee, may He turn His countenance upon thee and grant thee—peace!"

A few days later Engelbrecht left the city to take a position that had been offered him at the imperial theatre in Vienna.

"Don't you want to play something for me, my blessed child?" Raschelchen asked the next day, after Reinchen had removed the torn strings of the violin and was beginning to stretch fresh ones. Reinchen took up the bow, touched the strings, and laid it down again.

"I can't, mother dear," she said quietly.

Her cheeks were white. It was a long time before they began to redden again, and this time the roses lay sharply defined and glowing upon the transparent skin. Her eyes seemed larger and more brilliant than formerly.

At Shabuos Raschelchen took her daughter to the Temple. On the steps they met Mrs. Büding, who looked in surprise and concern at the slender girl with her flushed cheeks and pale lips.

"What's the matter with you?" she asked, stroking the blond locks. "Aren't you feeling well?"

"Is anything the matter with my Reinchen?" Raschelchen exclaimed, taken aback.

"Nothing's the matter with me," said Reinchen, and smiled.

"But there is! I know what you need." Reinchen grew hot.

"You need light and air. You studied too hard during the winter, and now in the

spring not a ray of sunlight strikes your street. Something must be done about it."

A few days later Mrs. Büding rented a room in a gardener's house outside the Holland Gate, and insisted on the two women's occupying it. The spinet and the violin were transferred to the new apartment, but they remained untouched. There was no need for the physician Mrs. Büding had sent to forbid Reinchen to play.

She sat in the garden quietly enjoying the flowers, and inclining her head toward the sunshine like a monthly rose in a glass of water. She always met her mother's look with a smile. Soon she could not leave her room from sheer weariness. The gardener's people set flower-pots on her window sill, and laid roses on the bed-spread. Over the bed hung her violin. She did not complain of any pain, she merely smiled more and more gently, like the flickering of a lamp in which the oil is burning away.

Raschelchen did not seem to notice her

child's condition. She sat at her bed quietly and without concern. The women of the community visited her frequently, and Mrs. Spohr often made sympathetic inquiries regarding her favorite's health. One day Aunt Channe went to see Raschelchen. Experienced old woman that she was, who had many and many a time sat alongside sick beds, she noted with great anxiety the telling line that extended from the girl's transparent nose to the red spots on her sunken cheeks. She gave no voice to her fears, and merely said to Raschelchen, who accompanied her to the garden:

"God will help."

Raschelchen smiled.

"Of course, He will," she said with singular assurance. "Nothing will happen to my Reinchen. I know it. I just now read again about the sacrifice of Abraham. The Holy One, blessed be He, didn't want to take his child from our father Abraham. He just wanted to find out if he loved Him

or his child better. And afterward He sent His Angel. And it is accounted a great merit to Abraham that he was willing to put his child to death. Even now we still remind God of Abraham, and ask Him to forgive us our sins because of what he did. That's what's written in the Torah, isn't it, Mrs. Channe? And honor thy father and thy mother is also something for which you're rewarded. That's the reason I'm perfectly easy in my mind that nothing can happen to my Reinchen. I still think it's nothing more than weakness from growing so fast."

To comfort her Aunt Channe agreed with her.

"Of course of course! That's what's written in the Torah."

So Raschelchen, happy in her confidence, sat at the foot of Reinchen's bed, and chatted with the sick girl.

"Now, Reinchen," she said, "now Reinchen, my heart, you're big enough for me

to tell you what I never told you—about your father.”

Reinchen’s hands quivered in hers.

“Yes, yes,” she whispered.

“You know, my pearl, I come of good people. My father of blessed memory was the famous cantor of the large Shul in Metz. He had a voice—I can’t tell you what a voice he had. He trilled like a night-ingale. My mother, peace be with her, died when I was little, and Mühmle Madel, my father’s sister, brought me up. She prayed the whole day long, and I could do whatever I wanted to. I didn’t learn anything, but three times a day I dressed my hair a different way. Hair-dressing seemed to stick in my fingers. My father never said an angry word to me. When Mühmle scolded me, he pinched my cheek. Good Lord, what a man he was! You got all your music from him. He loved me the way I love you, and I—God forgive me for it—!” Sobs choked her voice.

"But you were going to tell me of my father, mother dear," said Reinchen, stroking Raschelchen's hands.

"Yes, that was in the year nine. The army was on its way to Austria, and took up quarters in Metz. A man lodged with us who had something to do with purveying for the commissary. He was a Jew from Alsace, and his name was Piccard. He was with us for four weeks. Handsome—handsome as an angel of the Lord. The cut of his features was exactly like yours. My father liked to listen to him, because he talked like a book, and I liked to listen much more. I didn't hear anything in the world except Piccard, I didn't see anything except Piccard with his blond hair. Can you imagine it?"

Reinchen closed her eyes, and a slight shudder drew the muscles of her pale face.

"Well, when the time came for the army to continue on its way, he said to me: 'Raschelchen, come with me, be my wife.'"

"I flew to my father. I was in the seventh heaven.

" 'My dear child,' said my father, 'don't be led astray. Stay with your old father. You won't have it better anywhere in the world. You don't know him well enough, and a person mustn't depend merely on fair speeches, and you will be going with him to where there is war. Take my advice, my child, and put the idea out of your head.'

" 'My father doesn't approve,' I said to him.

" 'Why do you ask your father if you love me?' he said. 'A wife should leave father and mother and cleave to her husband. That's what is written in the Torah.'

"How shall I tell you, Reinchen, my jewel? When he had to go away, I felt as if he were drawing my soul from me. And I—I went along with him, in secret, without telling my father. We were married in Strassburg by the mayor. I wanted to go to the Rav, but he said:

“ ‘It’s the new law, and in time of war you can’t budge.’

“So we travelled along till we reached Ulm, where they stopped a long time. I couldn’t go any farther on account of you. At night I cried my eyes out for sorrow over my father, and that vexed him so, and I didn’t have another good hour. I saw I was a burden to him. Then he said I couldn’t go any further, and he gave me money, and I went back home to my father. When I threw myself down before him and cried, he didn’t say an angry word; and when Mühmle Madel railed at me, he would say:

“ ‘What are you doing? Isn’t she punished enough?’

“Then you were born, and he blessed you with his pious hands. Such a father! But I saw how I had grieved him to death. Because he was all broken down, and he coughed. Trouble makes people old before their time. I waited and waited for a letter,

but nothing came. I heard the purveying commission had taken up quarters in Cassel, and I left once more. Even if Mühmle did scold me, she liked you, and I knew you would be cared for. I arrived in Cassel, and ran my feet off looking for him, but nobody knew anything about him. I was ashamed to go back to my father, and I was afraid of Mühmle, so I wrote I had found him, and I sent home the money I earned by hair-dressing, as if he were sending it for his child. I hid my great sorrow, and smiled and laughed so that I shouldn't weary people. I kept asking after him, and I finally found out from the wife of a general whose hair I dressed that he had gone with the great army to Russia. But he never came away from Russia, nebbich, and may God pardon him, as I pardoned him long ago. I didn't deserve any better than I got.

“ ‘Honor thy father and thy mother ’ is on the two tablets that God Himself gave to

Moshe Rabbenu! Isn't it so, my Reinchen, my blessed child?"

Reinchen drew her mother's hand to her hot, cracked lips, and again closed her eyes with their long golden lashes.

"Well," continued Raschelchen, "when the Empire came to an end here, what was there for me to do? I went home, and my father—I didn't see him again! God had taken him to Himself four weeks before. I couldn't even close his eyes, those good soft eyes. You must remember his eyes, Reinchen. You were four years old already! I didn't tear my hair out, so as not to give the others the satisfaction of seeing me stricken down by my troubles. I kneeled at his grave, and swore I would be pious like himself, so that in the next world he would pardon me the grief I caused him here on earth. My father, nebbich, didn't leave anything; there was no way of earning money at home, and I was ashamed, too, so I left what little there was to Mühmle

Madel, and came here with you where I knew there were good people. You were my Mazel and my Broche, and you still are. It was for your sake that they took me up. Everything else you know. But one thing you don't know—how happy I was in my poverty, because I was rich in having you. Even though in winter I didn't have a warm dress to put on my body, I felt wealthy as the queen of spades when I was leading you by the hand. And when I heard your little voice or the sound of your violin, it seemed to me my father was laughing in Gan-Eden, and I would have liked it best for no one to hear you except him and me. Now can you understand, my crown, what went on inside of me because you had to play in the church? But don't let's speak of it any more. It's past. And supposing it was a sin, you made up for it ten times over when you sacrificed your heart for God and your mother. You ransomed my soul with God Almighty; on Judgment Day your

Sechus will stand your poor mother in good stead!"

She sank her head sobbing on the girl's breast, and Reinchen put her thin arms about her mother's neck. Raschelchen heard the ominous throbbing of her heart, and started up in fright.

"Don't excite yourself, my soul!" she cried, and stroked the beloved head, which she allowed to sink back gently on the pillow.

The autumn wind began to rob the trees in the garden of their foliage. With great wide-open eyes Reinchen stared out upon the golden leaves softly whirling in the air. Once she whispered:

"I wonder whether I'll see the trees green again."

"What nonsense you're talking!" her mother chided her. "How can anything happen to you? The Lord knows what you are!"

One day when Raschelchen was out walk-

ing, a woman who had been a neighbor of hers on the narrow street stopped her to inquire for the "dear girl."

"Have you heard the news, Mrs. Piccard?" she asked Raschelchen. "Christian Engelbrecht has had a great piece of luck. A baker's daughter in Vienna fell in love with him, and married him, and brought him a three-story house with many hundreds of thousands of gulden!"

Raschelchen shook her head, and smiled scornfully.

"That's the way the Goy is," she murmured to herself.

Should she tell Reinchen? Perhaps if Reinchen heard how quickly Engelbrecht had forgotten her, the last shadow of recollection would vanish from the child's heart, and her recovery would be hastened. But no, rather not mention the hated name! Nevertheless Raschelchen felt uneasy. Nothing oppressed her more than doubt. How could she have endured her beloved

child's invalidism so quietly, had she not had the certainty that her Reinchen's sacrifice was a Mitzve which God must requite with complete recovery.

"God is a righteous judge," she often murmured to herself. "As he punished me, so must he reward my Reinchen."

She calmly looked upon her child lying with bound hands upon the wood of the offering; for she knew the Angel of the Lord was near to stay the drawn knife and announce her child's salvation.

And the redeeming angel was near!

The great holidays arrived. This year they fell late, in October, when the autumn wind beat upon the window panes of the gardener's house. While all the other Jewish women clad in white garments were praying in the Temple, Raschelchen sat at the bed of her child, whose breath came softly but quickly. Two candles burned on the white cloth covering the little table, and a bunch of late monthly roses, pale and dy-

ing, breathed their perfume over the sick-bed.

Reinchen started up as from a dream, and stretched out her thin hand for the violin hanging over her bed.

"What do you want, my precious?"

"The violin," gasped the girl.

Raschelchen paused to consider whether she ought to give her the violin on the sacred New Year's Eve. But sick people are allowed everything. She climbed on the bed, and unhooked the violin from the nail. Reinchen put out her hands for it, and pressed a long kiss on the loose strings. Tears welled up in her great eyes, and she regarded the instrument with unspeakable tenderness.

"I dreamed," she whispered, "I dreamed I played on it—the sonata in F, and—" she shook her head softly with a deep sigh.

"You will play it again, my blessed child," exclaimed the mother, "and more beautifully than ever! Do you know what

I've decided to do? When you are entirely well—God grant it—I will go with you and let you play for audiences wherever you want. You and I alone! Should I be ashamed because I'm an old Jewess? If I am, aren't you my child? And nobody need see me. I'll only dress you, in beautiful new dresses. Mrs. Büding told me she'd give you a trousseau as if you were a Kalle. Mrs. Spohr will give us letters, too, to all the fine musicians, and when you play, I'll stand behind the door through which you go out, with a little shawl ready in my hand, so that, God forbid, you shouldn't catch a cold. Isn't it so, my heart, I may? And then we'll travel on farther and farther, until we reach Metz, where I'll show you and be proud of you. Well, what do you say to it, my child?"

Reinchen seemed scarcely to hear her mother's chatter. Her eyes were fastened on the violin.

"I dreamed I was playing the sonata by

Beethoven, you know—" her transparent fingers touched the strings to indicate the theme of the adagio movement—"and Christian—was sitting at the spinet—and —"

The mother shrank at the name.

"Don't speak to me of the Goy any more," she burst out. "You mustn't think of him! He married in Vienna, and—"

She could not continue. She would have recalled the words with her life, for Reichen stared at her with eyes from which her soul seemed to be issuing forth. As if impelled by some invisible force, the emaciated body reared up, both hands clutched convulsively at her heart, and a stream of blood gushed from the compressed lips.

"Shema Yisroel!" shrieked the mother, and threw herself on the dying child.

The scream brought the gardener's people running. They sent for the women's Chevre, who had to tear the unconscious mother from the body of her child.

Aunt Channe, leaving the women watchers in the garden-house, turned her attention to Raschelchen, whom she had taken to her own home in a sedan-chair. She finally succeeded in bringing her out of the faint into which she had fallen, and Raschelchen stared at the strange surroundings as if half asleep.

"Is my Reinchen dead?" she finally asked.

"Praised be the Judge of truth!" was my aunt's rejoinder, in the words of the prayer said over the dead.

Raschelchen shook her head incredulously.

"It can't be," she said. "If God is just, how can my Reinchen be dead?"

"The ways of God are inscrutable," rejoined the pious old woman.

Raschelchen lapsed into deeper and deeper broodings.

"My child died of a broken heart," she murmured. "Am I to blame? I don't

know! If it is right for a child to leave her parents and cleave to her husband, as is written in the Torah, then what was *my* sin? But if it is right for a child to sacrifice her heart and obey her parents, as is written in the Torah, what was *her* sin? Somebody ought to know what is right and what is wrong, if my Reinchen must die in the bloom of her youth."

Suddenly she shrieked, and jumped from her chair.

"I want to go to my child. Don't be afraid, Mrs. Channe, I know what I am doing. I know my child is dead, and I know I must live. But let me go to my child, for God's sake!"

Aunt Channe could not restrain her. As if driven by a storm, she flew back to the gardener's house, and frightened the watchers by her appearance. They expected to see her commit some act of desperation. But she merely pulled back the cover that hid her beloved child's face, and regarded

the beautiful, rigid features. Then she seated herself at the foot of the bed, and shook her head, and murmured words that nobody understood.

On account of the holiday, the corpse could not be removed for two days. During the whole time the mother sat there repelling all efforts to draw her to rest or give her nourishment. When the time came for the burial, she permitted no one else to dress Reinchen and lay her in the coffin. She shoved the violin that the dying girl had held pressed to her breast under the straw pillow on which Reinchen's head lay, and strewed all the wilted roses over the dead body. When the orthodox women wanted to keep her from committing this sin, she looked at them searchingly.

"Do you know what is a sin?" she cried.

Then she kneeled next to the coffin, and whispered a long, long time into her child's ear, as if she were chatting with her. The women caught only a few broken words.

“You’ll speak in my behalf, won’t you?
You’ll wait for me, Reinchen, my precious!
Soon—soon!”

Almost the entire community, as well as Ludwig Spohr and his wife, attended the funeral. Since women are not allowed in the burying ground on such occasions, Raschelchen slipped to the scene by by-ways, and hid herself in the hedge.

The women of the community subscribed a modest pension for her, and found a lodging with good people. She begged and pleaded, however, to be permitted to stay in the little house in the village next to the cemetery, where the invalids of the community are cared for. Her request was granted. She spent weeks there, paying daily visits to the grave of her child. A short time after, the woman who washed corpses died, and Raschelchen applied for the position, which she held for thirty years. She lived exclusively with the dead, who were the messengers of her greetings of love

to Reinchen. She scarcely had any intercourse whatsoever with the living.

One Saturday I was taking a walk in the grove of oaks near the cemetery. Though it is not the custom for anyone to visit the cemetery on Sabbath, there was the figure of the old woman cowering on a mound planted with many flowers. From the Fish House a short distance away came the soft trembling notes of a violin. I saw Raschelchen raise her hands to Heaven. A deep sigh escaped her bosom, as if she wanted to expel her soul by force. I stepped nearer to her, filled with sympathy. She started. But then her dim eyes regarded me searchingly. She appeared to wish to speak to me.

“Do you know me?” I asked.

“Why shouldn’t I know you? I buried your little sister Estherchen. There she lies at the hedge next to the willow. And your parents, may God reward them, always were good to me.”

"Haven't the many, many years been able to still your pain?" I asked her, deeply moved.

"Yes, yes, it's many, many years," she murmured. "How many? I haven't counted them. My heart has grown still, but my head! I have been breaking my head over it for twenty years and more. Should a poor girl cleave to her husband or to her parents? What is right? What is wrong? If both are written in the Torah? You're a learned man—how do you explain it that I'm alive and she's dead? When will I find out? How long will it still last?"

It did not last much longer. Did she find out what is right and what is wrong? Who can tell?

GLOSSARY

GLOSSARY

(All words given below, unless otherwise specified, are Hebrew. The transliteration aims to reproduce the colloquial pronunciation of Hebrew words by German Jews.)

- ARBA-KANFES.** Lit. "four corners." A garment with fringes. See Num. XV, 38.
- AYIN HORA.** The evil eye.
- BAR-MITZVAH.** Religious majority, at the age of thirteen, when a Jewish lad is expected to take all religious duties upon himself.
- BENSH GOMEL.** To pronounce a blessing for escape from danger.
- BOLES (Ger. ?).** A sort of cake.
- BROCHE.** A benediction.
- CHAMMER.** Ass; donkey.
- CHEN.** Grace.
- CHEVRE.** Society.
- CHEVRE KADISHE.** Holy brotherhood; the society that prepares the dead for burial.
- CHOSEN.** Bridegroom.
- CHUPPE.** Marriage canopy.
- DARSHEN.** To expound homiletically.
- DROSHE.** A sermon; a homily.
- GAN-EDEN.** Paradise.
- GOY (pl. GOYIM).** A non-Jew.
- GROSCHEN (Ger.).** A small coin.
- GULDEN (Ger.).** A florin.
- HALLEL.** Lit. "praise." Psalms CXIII to CXVIII. On the New Moon, only certain portions of this collection are recited, which are called "half-Hallel."
- HELLER (Ger.).** A small coin.
- JUDENGASSE (Ger.).** Jews' Street.
- JUDENSHUL (Ger.).** Synagogue.
- KALLE.** Bride; affianced.
- KIDDUSH.** Lit. "sanctification." The ceremony ushering in the Sabbath or a holiday.
- KIDDUSH HA-SHEM.** Sanctification of the Holy Name.
- KILLE.** Jewish congregation; Jewish community.
- KORIM.** Kneeling. "Fall Korim," to prostrate oneself, particularly at certain prayers on the Day of Atonement, etc.
- KOSHER.** Ritually permitted.
- KOVED.** Honor.
- LEB (Ger. LEBEN).** Dear, my love; my life.

GLOSSARY

- LECHO DODI.** Lit. "Come, my beloved." The refrain of the hymn with which the Sabbath is welcomed.
- LO KOM.** Such has never been, and will never be again! See Deut. XXXIV, 10.
- LUACH.** Calendar.
- MATZOS.** Unleavened bread.
- MAZEL.** Luck.
- MENUVELTE.** A homely, ungainly girl.
- MESHOES.** Assistant; servant.
- MINCHA.** Afternoon service.
- MINYAN.** A company of ten men, the minimum for a public service.
- MITZVE.** Duty; command; charity; the fulfilment of a command.
- MOSHE RABBENU.** Moses our teacher.
- MÜHMLE (Ger.).** Diminutive of MUHME. Aunt; cousin.
- NEBBICH (Slavic).** An expression of pity or sympathy. Poor thing! Alas! Too bad!
- NIGUN.** Traditional chant.
- OMEN VE-OMEN.** Amen and Amen.
- OVINU MALKENU.** Lit. "Our Father, our King." Beginning of the lines of a well-known prayer.
- PARNES.** The head of a congregation; the president.
- PASKEN.** To decide according to the Rabbinic law.
- PESACH.** Passover.
- PURIM.** The Feast of Esther.
- RIV.** Officiating rabbi.
- REB.** Mr.
- REBBETZIN.** Wife of a rabbi.
- REICHTHALER (Ger.).** A dollar, the unit of the currency.
- ROSHE.** A malicious person; an Anti-Semite.
- SCHLEMIHLE.** Feminine form of SCHLEMIHL.
- SCHNÄPPSCHEN (Ger.).** A "drop" of whisky.
- SCHNOBB (Ger.).** To beg.
- SCHNORREB (Ger.).** Beggar.
- SECHIE.** Advantage; privilege; joy.
- SECHUS.** Merit; privilege.
- SEDER.** Home service on the first two nights of the Passover.
- SHABES.** Sabbath.
- SHABUOS.** Pentecost.
- SHADCHONIM. (pl.).** Marriage brokers.
- SHAMMES.** Verger; beadle; sexton.
- SHEM YISHMERENU.** The Lord preserve us!
- SHEMA YISROEL.** Hear, O Israel!
- SHICKSEL (Ger. suffix).** Drastic expression for a non-Jewish girl.
- SHIDDECH.** Betrothal; an arranged match.

GLOSSARY

SHIR HA-MA'ALOS. Lit. "Song of the Degrees." One of the fifteen Psalms CXX to CXXXIV; here, Ps. CXXVI.	TISHO BE-AV. Ninth Day of Ab, commemorating the destruction of the First and of the Second Temple.
SHIVE. Lit. "seven." The seven days of mourning immediately after a death occurs in a family.	TORAH. The Jewish Law in general, and the Pentateuch in particular.
SHMUES. Hearsay; talk based on rumor.	TORAS MOSHE. The Law of Moses.
SHTUSS. Nonsense; folly.	TREIFES. Ritually unfit for food.
SCHUL (<i>Ger.</i> , <i>SCHUL'</i>). Synagogue.	TRENDERL (<i>Ger.</i>). A sort of top, made for children especially on Chanuccah.
SIDDUR. Prayer-book.	UNBERUFEN (<i>Ger.</i>). <i>Abst omen!</i>
SIDDURL (<i>Ger. suffix</i>). Diminutive of SIDDUR.	UNBESCHRIEEN (<i>Ger.</i>). <i>Abst omen!</i>
SUCCOS. Feast of Tabernacles.	YESHIVE. Talmudic college.
TACHSHID. Jewel; ornament.	YEVORECHECHO. [The Lord] bless thee!
TEFILLIN. Phylacteries.	YIDDE (<i>Ger.</i>). Jews.
THALER (<i>Ger.</i>). Dollar.	

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